6. MARKANDEYA PURANA

INTRODUCTION

Once Jaimini, a disciple of sage Veda Vyasa expressed his curiosity before Markandeya- 'O Lord! In the great epic Mahabharata, which was created by Veda Vyasa, description of Dharma, Arth, Kama and Moksha appears to be intertwined at times and at other times, it appears to be separate from one another. Veda Vyasa had described the norms, the stages and the means to perform the duties in all the four stages. This epic contains cryptic knowledge of Vedas. Hence O great sage! I have approached you in order to grasp the full knowledge contained in Mahabharata with your help. Why did Lord take human incarnation even though He is the cause of the origin, perpetuation and destruction of the universe? How did Draupadi become the wife of five Pandavas? How did Balarama expiate for the sin of killing a Brahmin? How did Draupadi's sons give up their lives? Kindly narrate all these things in detail. '

Markandeya says- 'O Muni! Presently I am engaged in evening worship. Hence I do not have time to narrate these things in detail. But I am telling you about the birds which will narrate you the entire content of Mahabharata. Those birds will also remove all your doubts. Sons of the great bird Drona- Pingaksha, Vibodha, Suputra, Sumuk etc. stay in the caves among the hills of Vindhyachal. They are proficient in Vedas. Go and ask them, they will remove all your doubts.'

Markandeya's words surprised Jaimini. To confirm, he asked again- 'It is surprising that the birds could narrate the content of Mahabharata just like human beings. It is even more surprising that they are proficient in Vedas knowledge, which is even rare to find among humans. Kindly tell me how did they come to acquire such profound knowledge despite having being born in the form of birds. Why do you call them as the sons of Drona?'

Markandeya says- 'Long ago, a strange event took place in Nandanvan involving Indra, Devrishi Narada and some of the apsaras. One day, Indra was enjoying his time in the Nandanvan forest along with his apsaras. At the same time Narada also arrived there. Indra welcomed and offered him a seat. The apsaras also greeted Narada. Indra then said- 'Munivar! Tell me what you desire now? If you desire to listen to a song, should I order the Gandharvas or if you wish to watch the dance, should I order one of my apsaras, Menka, Rambha, Mishrakeshi or Urvashi? Any of these four can perform a seducing dance before you.'

Narada expressed his desire to watch the dance of an apsara, who was superior in beauty to the other apsaras. This led to a row among the apsaras. Each one of them was proud of her beauty and talent. Narada then advised them to test their beauty by breaking sage Durvasa's penance who was at that time staying on a hilltop. All the apsaras expressed their inability to perform this task successfully. Only an apsara named Vapu, driven by her haughtiness accepted to break the penance of sage Durvasa.

Accordingly she reached the hill where Durvasa was staying and began to sing an infatuating song in her sweet voice. Very soon, the song began to show its effect on Durvasa. Attracted by the sweet voice, Durvasa went in search of the origin of the voice and found Vapu singing at a distance. Durvasa understood that the apsara had come to break his penance. Angrily, he cursed the apsara that she would take birth in the lineage of the birds for sixteen years, she would not bear a child and ultimately would be killed by a weapon to regain her heavenly abode. After saying this, sage Durvasa migrated to Akashganga.

VARIOUS CREATIONS AND FAMOUS MYTHOUOGICAU CHARACTERS

BIRTH OF FOUR BIRDS

Markandeya says - 'In the lineage of the avian King Garuda, there were two brothers- Kank and Kandhar. One day, Kank visited Kailash Parbat where a demon Vidrayudrup, who was a slave of Kubera, was enjoying privacy with his wife and drinking wine. Seeing Kank, the demon showed his displeasure at his arrival at an improper time. But Kank boldly asserted his right on the mountain as according to him, it belonged to all. The infuriated demon decapitated Kank with his sword.

Hearing the news of his brother's killing, Kandhar resolved to kill the demon. After performing the last rites of his brother, he also arrived on the mountain where the demon Vidrayudrup was still drinking wine with his wife. The demon lost his temper again. Kandhar then challenged the demon to have a fight with him. A fierce battle ensued between them. Ultimately, Kandhar killed the demon. The demon's wife Madanika finding herself in a helpless situation accepted Kandhar as her husband. Thus, Kandhar returned to his palace with a newly found wife. Madanika was in fact the daughter of Menka, the apsara and could change her guise at will. After marrying Kandhar, she took the guise of the bird. The bird Madanika was born as apsara Vapu in her next birth due to the curse of sage Durvasa. Kandhar named her Tarkshi.

A Brahmin named Mandapal had four sons. Drona was the youngest among them and proficient in scriptures, Vedas etc. Kandhar married his daughter, Tarkshi to Drona. After their marriage, Drona and Tarkshi were spending their time happily. Tarkshi conceived during the same time when the battle of Mahabharata was going on. As destiny would have it, Tarkshi flew over the battlefield where she saw Arjuna and Bhagdatt, the king of Pragjyotishpur, fighting valiantly against each other. Accidentally an arrow aimed at Bhagdatt went in the direction of Tarkshi and struck her in the abdomen and tore it apart. As a result of this, four eggs fell on the ground. At the same time, a huge bell fell from Supratik's neck, the elephant of Bhagdatt, and covered the eggs safely.

After the battle of Mahabharata was over, a sage Shami visited the battlefield. There he happened to spot the bell and heard faint chirping coming from underneath the bell. The sage removed the bell and discovered four wingless chicks beneath it. Surprisingly he said to his disciples- 'Look! Falling of these eggs and getting safely covered by the bell simultaneously shows that these chicks are no ordinary birds.' Then he instructed his disciples to carry the eggs to the hermitage and keep it securely at a place safe from predators. The disciples did as told.

VARIOUS CREATIONS AND FAMOUS MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS

BIRTH OF FOUR BIRDS

Markandeya says - 'In the lineage of the avian King Garuda, there were two brothers- Kank and Kandhar. One day, Kank visited Kailash Parbat where a demon Vidrayudrup, who was a slave of Kubera, was enjoying privacy with his wife and drinking wine. Seeing Kank, the demon showed his displeasure at his arrival at an improper time. But Kank boldly asserted his right on the mountain as according to him, it belonged to all. The infuriated demon decapitated Kank with his sword.

Hearing the news of his brother's killing, Kandhar resolved to kill the demon. After performing the last rites of his brother, he also arrived on the mountain where the demon Vidrayudrup was still drinking wine with his wife. The demon lost his temper again. Kandhar then challenged the demon to have a fight with him. A fierce battle ensued between them. Ultimately, Kandhar killed the demon. The demon's wife Madanika finding herself in a helpless situation accepted Kandhar as her husband. Thus, Kandhar returned to his palace with a newly found wife. Madanika was in fact the daughter of Menka, the apsara and could change her guise at will. After marrying Kandhar, she took the guise of the bird. The bird Madanika was born as apsara Vapu in her next birth due to the curse of sage Durvasa. Kandhar named her Tarkshi.

A Brahmin named Mandapal had four sons. Drona was the youngest among them and proficient in scriptures, Vedas etc. Kandhar married his daughter, Tarkshi to Drona. After their marriage, Drona and Tarkshi were spending their time happily. Tarkshi conceived during the same time when the battle of Mahabharata was going on. As destiny would have it, Tarkshi flew over the battlefield where she saw Arjuna and Bhagdatt, the king of Pragjyotishpur, fighting valiantly against each other. Accidentally an arrow aimed at Bhagdatt went in the direction of Tarkshi and struck her in the abdomen and tore it apart. As a result of this, four eggs fell on the ground. At the same time, a huge bell fell from Supratik's neck, the elephant of Bhagdatt, and covered the eggs safely.

After the battle of Mahabharata was over, a sage Shami visited the battlefield. There he happened to spot the bell and heard faint chirping coming from underneath the bell. The sage removed the bell and discovered four wingless chicks beneath it. Surprisingly he said to his disciples- 'Look! Falling of these eggs and getting safely covered by the bell simultaneously shows that these chicks are no ordinary birds.' Then he instructed his disciples to carry the eggs to the hermitage and keep it securely at a place safe from predators. The disciples did as told.

BIRDS MIGRATE TO VINDHYACHAL

Sage Shami thereafter began to foster the chicks in his hermitage. With time, the chicks grew feathers and began to fly here and there. But every

time the birds went out, they returned to the hermitage by evening. The birds also gained Vedic knowledge by hearing the discourses, which sage Shami used to give daily to his disciples.

One day, when sage Shami was preaching his disciples, the birds arrived there and said- 'O great sage! You are like our father because you have protected us. You are our teacher also because we have gained knowledge from you. Now we have grown up, kindly tell us what should we do?'. The birds speaking like learned people amazed the sage as well as his disciple.

He asked the birds- 'Tell us, how did you speak so clearly and is there any curse behind your present condition?'. The birds replied- 'O sage! Long ago, there used to live a sage, Vipulasvan. He had two sons- Sukrish and Tumbaru. In our previous birth, we were the sons of Sukrish. When our father and uncle performed Yagya, we brought them all the required materials. One day, Indra arrived at our hermitage disguised as an aged bird. The aged bird was starving, hence we requested our father to provide him with some food. Upon enquiring by our father, the bird expressed his desire to eat human flesh. Our father tried to dissuade the bird but it did not give up its insistence. Then our father called us and said that he had promised the bird to feed it with human flesh. So, we were asked to donate our body in order to satisfy the bird's hunger. But being frightened, we expressed our inability to meet the demand of the starving bird. This infuriated our father for we were violating his promise that he had made to the bird. He then cursed us to take birth as birds in our next life and himself got ready to donate his body. As our father was breathing his last, Indra resumed his real self and said- 'O great sage! I took this guise only to test your character. Kindly forgive me and tell me what you desire now?' Indra blessed our father to have divine knowledge and penance free from all obstacles. Thereafter we also fell at our father's feet and begged for his pardon. We requested him to take back his words but he said that his words would not go futile. But still he blessed us to have supreme knowledge even in the form of birds.'

Concluding their talk, the birds said- 'O lord! Thus controlled by destiny, our father cursed us. After sometime, we took birth in bird form in the battlefield where you found us and fostered us in your hermitage. Now we are strong enough to fly long distances. So kindly free us from your obligation.' Hearing the words of the birds, sage Shami said to his

disciples- 'Look! I had already told you that these birds were no ordinary creatures. They even survived the battle of Mahabharata. It shows their greatness.' Then sage Shami granted them permission to migrate to the Vindhyachal. The birds decided to pass their time by studying the Vedas and doing penance as long as they stayed there.

BIRDS MIGRATE TO VINDHYACHAL

Sage Shami thereafter began to foster the chicks in his hermitage. With time, the chicks grew feathers and began to fly here and there. But every time the birds went out, they returned to the hermitage by evening. The birds also gained Vedic knowledge by hearing the discourses, which sage Shami used to give daily to his disciples.

One day, when sage Shami was preaching his disciples, the birds arrived there and said- 'O great sage! You are like our father because you have protected us. You are our teacher also because we have gained knowledge from you. Now we have grown up, kindly tell us what should we do?'. The birds speaking like learned people amazed the sage as well as his disciple.

He asked the birds- 'Tell us, how did you speak so clearly and is there any curse behind your present condition?'. The birds replied- 'O sage! Long ago, there used to live a sage, Vipulasvan. He had two sons- Sukrish and Tumbaru. In our previous birth, we were the sons of Sukrish. When our father and uncle performed Yagya, we brought them all the required materials. One day, Indra arrived at our hermitage disguised as an aged bird. The aged bird was starving, hence we requested our father to provide him with some food. Upon enquiring by our father, the bird expressed his desire to eat human flesh. Our father tried to dissuade the bird but it did not give up its insistence. Then our father called us and said that he had promised the bird to feed it with human flesh. So, we were asked to donate our body in order to satisfy the bird's hunger. But being frightened, we expressed our inability to meet the demand of the starving bird. This infuriated our father for we were violating his promise that he had made to the bird. He then cursed us to take birth as birds in our next life and himself got ready to donate his body. As our father was breathing his last, Indra resumed his real self and said- 'O great sage! I took this guise only to test your character. Kindly forgive me and tell me what you desire now?' Indra blessed our father to have divine knowledge and penance free from all obstacles. Thereafter we also fell at our father's feet and begged for his pardon. We requested him to take back his words but he said that his words would not go futile. But still he blessed us to have supreme knowledge even in the form of birds.'

Concluding their talk, the birds said- 'O lord! Thus controlled by destiny, our father cursed us. After sometime, we took birth in bird form in the battlefield where you found us and fostered us in your hermitage. Now we are strong enough to fly long distances. So kindly free us from your obligation.' Hearing the words of the birds, sage Shami said to his disciples- 'Look! I had already told you that these birds were no ordinary creatures. They even survived the battle of Mahabharata. It shows their greatness.' Then sage Shami granted them permission to migrate to the Vindhyachal. The birds decided to pass their time by studying the Vedas and doing penance as long as they stayed there.

DIVINE PLAYS OF GOD

Sage Jaimini reached Vindhyachal and arrived before the birds as per Markandeya's instructions. He said- 'O birds! I am Jaimini, the disciple of

Veda Vyasa. I have come here with a desire to have your glimpse.' The birds welcomed him saying- 'It is our great fortune that you have arrived here. Your arrival has made us feel as if God himself has arrived.' Jaimini said- 'O learned birds! Kindly listen to the purpose of my visit. Sage Markandeya instructed me to come here and see you. You kindly answer my questions that I have in the context of Mahabharata.' The birds assured him of every possible explanation as per their knowledge. Sage Jaimini proceeded- 'Why did Lord take human incarnation even though He is the cause of the origin, perpetuation and destruction of the universe? How did Draupadi come to be the queen of five Pandavas? How did Balarama expiate for the sin of killing a Brahmin? How were Draupadi's sons attain martyrdom? Kindly narrate all these things in detail.'

The birds say- 'The omnipotent, omniscient and the omnipresent Almighty God is worshipped even by the deities. We salute that Lord Vishnu who is the originator of this universe and who pervades everywhere. We salute Brahma from whose four mouths, the Vedas appeared and sanctified all the three worlds. We bow down at the feet of Mahadeva. Those sages who have metaphysical knowledge assert that Narayan exists in four forms, which are both tangible and intangible. His first form is Vasudev, appearance of who is more imaginative in nature. This form exists everywhere and in every ages.

The second form of Narayan is the one that bears the earth on his head. This form of god is known as Shesh. Being Tamasi in nature, this form has taken a serpent incarnation. The third form of God exhibits his divine power and plays. It fosters all the creatures, protects religion, and is known as Pradyumna. Yet another form of God known as Aniruddh rests on the serpent's bed in the abysmal depth of water. It carries out the task of creation.

The third form of God destroys the irreligious demons. In the past, this same form rescued the earth from the abyss in the incarnation of a boar (Varaha avatar) and killed the demon King Hiranyakashipu in the form of Narsimha (lion face with human body). This same form of God has appeared now in Lord Krishna's incarnation.

DIVINE PLAYS OF GOD

Sage Jaimini reached Vindhyachal and arrived before the birds as per Markandeya's instructions. He said- 'O birds! I am Jaimini, the disciple of Veda Vyasa. I have come here with a desire to have your glimpse.' The birds welcomed him saying- 'It is our great fortune that you have arrived here. Your arrival has made us feel as if God himself has arrived.' Jaimini said- 'O learned birds! Kindly listen to the purpose of my visit. Sage Markandeya instructed me to come here and see you. You kindly answer my questions that I have in the context of Mahabharata.' The birds assured him of every possible explanation as per their knowledge. Sage Jaimini proceeded- 'Why did Lord take human incarnation even though He is the cause of the origin, perpetuation and destruction of the universe? How did Draupadi come to be the queen of five Pandavas? How did Balarama expiate for the sin of killing a Brahmin? How were Draupadi's sons attain martyrdom? Kindly narrate all these things in detail.'

The birds say- 'The omnipotent, omniscient and the omnipresent Almighty God is worshipped even by the deities. We salute that Lord Vishnu who is the originator of this universe and who pervades everywhere. We salute Brahma from whose four mouths, the Vedas appeared and sanctified all the three worlds. We bow down at the feet of Mahadeva. Those sages who have metaphysical knowledge assert that Narayan exists in four forms, which are both tangible and intangible. His first form is Vasudev, appearance of who is more imaginative in nature. This form exists everywhere and in every ages.

The second form of Narayan is the one that bears the earth on his head. This form of god is known as Shesh. Being Tamasi in nature, this form has taken a serpent incarnation. The third form of God exhibits his divine power and plays. It fosters all the creatures, protects religion, and is known as Pradyumna. Yet another form of God known as Aniruddh rests on the serpent's bed in the abysmal depth of water. It carries out the task of creation.

The third form of God destroys the irreligious demons. In the past, this same form rescued the earth from the abyss in the incarnation of a boar (Varaha avatar) and killed the demon King Hiranyakashipu in the form of Narsimha (lion face with human body). This same form of God has appeared now in Lord Krishna's incarnation.

DRAUPADI'S FIVE HUSBANDS

The birds say- 'Frightened by the severe penance of Trishira, Indra killed him to protect his authority and power. But the sin of killing a Brahmin

took away Indra's radiance. Trishira was the son of Twashta. Twashta became furious at his son's death. He plucked one strand of hair from his hair-lock and offered it in the sacrificial fire. This resulted into the creation of a formidable and strong demon named Vritrasur.

This demon was created with the objective of killing Indra.

Learning about the birth of Vritrasur, Indra sent Saptarishis as emissaries to work out a pact with the demon. The Saptarishis effected a friendship between Indra and Vritrasur. But Indra had other ideas. He took Vritrasur by surprise and killed him. This deceitful action of Indra further enraged the clans of the demons. Soon the atrocities of the demons increased to unbearable limits. Even Prithvi felt unable to bear the burden of their atrocities. She approached the deities and requested them to get her rid of the burden.

Thus, to relieve Prithvi of her burden, the deities began to take incarnation on earth. Dharma and Vayu implanted Indra's radiance in the womb of Kunti. This resulted in the birth of Yudhisthira and Bhima. Then Indra himself produced Arjuna from Kunti. Nakul and Sahadev were born because of Indra's radiance implanted by Ashwini kumars in the womb of Madri. Thus all the five Pandavas originated from the same source even though they appeared as distinct entities, whereas Draupadi was none other than Shuchi, the wife of Indra, produced from the altar in Drupad's palace. In human incarnation, Draupadi got five Pandavas as her husband.

DRAUPADI'S FIVE HUSBANDS

The birds say- 'Frightened by the severe penance of Trishira, Indra killed him to protect his authority and power. But the sin of killing a Brahmin took away Indra's radiance. Trishira was the son of Twashta. Twashta became furious at his son's death. He plucked one strand of hair from his hair-lock and offered it in the sacrificial fire. This resulted into the creation of a formidable and strong demon named Vritrasur. This demon was created with the objective of killing Indra.

Learning about the birth of Vritrasur, Indra sent Saptarishis as emissaries to work out a pact with the demon. The Saptarishis effected a friendship between Indra and Vritrasur. But Indra had other ideas. He took Vritrasur by surprise and killed him. This deceitful action of Indra further enraged the clans of the demons. Soon the atrocities of the demons increased to unbearable limits. Even Prithvi felt unable to bear the burden of their atrocities. She approached the deities and requested them to get her rid of the burden.

Thus, to relieve Prithvi of her burden, the deities began to take incarnation on earth. Dharma and Vayu implanted Indra's radiance in the womb of Kunti. This resulted in the birth of Yudhisthira and Bhima. Then Indra himself produced Arjuna from Kunti. Nakul and Sahadev were born because of Indra's radiance implanted by Ashwini kumars in the womb of Madri. Thus all the five Pandavas originated from the same source even though they appeared as distinct entities, whereas Draupadi was none other than Shuchi, the wife of Indra, produced from the altar in Drupad's palace. In human incarnation, Draupadi got five Pandavas as her husband.

EXPIATION OF BALARAMA

Sri Krishna's brother Balarama had remained impartial in the battle of Mahabharata. Instead of championing the cause either for the Pandavas

or for the Kauravas, he had preferred to go on a pilgrimage. His wife Revati also accompanied him on this pilgrimage. Once while travelling, Balarama drank toddy and entered a beautiful garden known as Raivat. Taking a stroll, Balarama and Revati then reached a hut.

In the hut, many Brahmins were sitting and listening to Suta's oration. When the Brahmins saw Balarama, they stood up and felicitated him. Only Suta did not stand up. Balarama felt insulted and at once killed him. When Balarama regained his composure after the intoxication receded, he felt guilty for his deed. His belief that killing of Suta would enable him to attain a place in Brahma loka proved to be based on false notion as the Brahmins had shunned him for his deed.

After Balarama realised his folly, he began to curse himself and resolved to observe a twelve-year long fast in order to expiate for his sin. Thereafter, Balarama migrated to a place of pilgrimage known as Pratiloma Saraswati to carry out his expiation.

EXPIATION OF BALARAMA

Sri Krishna's brother Balarama had remained impartial in the battle of Mahabharata. Instead of championing the cause either for the Pandavas or for the Kauravas, he had preferred to go on a pilgrimage. His wife Revati also accompanied him on this pilgrimage. Once while travelling, Balarama drank toddy and entered a beautiful garden known as Raivat. Taking a stroll, Balarama and Revati then reached a hut.

In the hut, many Brahmins were sitting and listening to Suta's oration. When the Brahmins saw Balarama, they stood up and felicitated him. Only Suta did not stand up. Balarama felt insulted and at once killed him. When Balarama regained his composure after the intoxication receded, he felt guilty for his deed. His belief that killing of Suta would enable him to attain a place in Brahma loka proved to be based on false notion as the Brahmins had shunned him for his deed.

After Balarama realised his folly, he began to curse himself and resolved to observe a twelve-year long fast in order to expiate for his sin. Thereafter, Balarama migrated to a place of pilgrimage known as Pratiloma Saraswati to carry out his expiation.

KILLING OF DRAUPADI'S SONS

In Treta Yuga, there was a king named Harishchandra. Once he was hunting in the Mahabahu forest when suddenly, he heard loud cries of a

woman- 'Save me! Save me!' It was followed by the cries of many women. Hearing those cries, King Harishchandra shouted loudly- 'Don't be afraid' and dashed in the direction of the cries. The cries however were an illusion created by Vighnaraj, the lord of the obstacles. At that time when King Harishchandra heard those cries, sage Vishwamitra was observing severe penance in the forest. In order to test Harishchandra's virtuosity, Vighnaraj entered his body. As soon as Vighnaraj entered Harishchandra's body, Harishchandra lost his temper and began to abuse Vishwamitra, which enraged him. His anger destroyed all the knowledge, he had acquired due to his severe penance. Seeing the angry Vishwamitra, King Harishchandra began to shiver. With folded hands, he begged Vishwamitra's pardon. He said- 'O great sage! It is my duty to protect the subjects. Kindly forgive me. Your wrath could greatly affect the performance of my duties as a king. Vishwamitra said- 'O king! If you are a true follower of religion, tell me, who should be given a donation? Who should be protected and who should be fought with?' Harishchandra answered- 'O great penancer! Donations should be made only to such a Brahmin who indulges in fast and religious actions. Protection should be extended to those who are afraid and battle should be fought with enemies.'

Vishwamitra said- 'If you are a religious king, give me Dakshaina (donation) as I am a Brahmin seeking salvation.' Harishchandra said- 'Tell me your desire. I am ready to grant it. Vishwamitra said- 'O king! Just presume that I have received whatever you would donate me. Now, give me Dakshaina for the Rajsuya Yagya.'

Harishchandra said- 'Ask me whatever you wish to have as the Dakshaina of Rajsuya Yagya.' Vishwamitra said- 'O king! Give me all you have except your own body, your wife and child.' Feeling pleased, King Harishchandra granted what Vishwamitra desired. Vishwamitra said- 'O king! Tell me, who is the lord of your kingdom?' Harishchandra said- 'Since the moment I have presented this kingdom to you, you are its master.' Vishwamitra said- 'If I am the master of this kingdom, what are you doing here? Leave at once! But before leaving, remove all your clothes, ornaments and other royal insignia and go out wearing tree's bark only.'

Thus after losing his kingdom, King Harishchandra got ready to leave

with his wife Shaivya and son Rohit. Vishwamitra then intercepted him and said- 'Where are you going without paying a Dakshaina for Rajsuya Yagya. Harishchandra said- 'O lord! I have donated my whole kingdom. Now only our bodies remain with us. What can I give you now?' Vishwamitra said- 'You cannot leave without paying a Dakshaina because you have promised me.' Harishchandra said- 'Don't be angry, O Brahmin! I have nothing at present in my position but I will definitely pay you your Dakshaina in due time.' Vishwamitra said angrily- 'Specify the time period within which you will give me my Dakshaina or else be ready to get cursed by me.' Harishchandra said- 'I will pay the Dakshaina within a month.' Thereafter, Harishchandra started to live in seclusion with his wife and children. Seeing the king's pitiable condition, his entire subjects began to follow him. Seeing their condition, Harishchandra halted and took a look on his subjects. At the same time, sage Vishwamitra also arrived there and began to curse Harishchandra for having attachment towards his subjects. Hearing the harsh words of Vishwamitra, Harishchandra left the kingdom with his

KILLING OF DRAUPADI'S SONS

In Treta Yuga, there was a king named Harishchandra. Once he was hunting in the Mahabahu forest when suddenly, he heard loud cries of a woman- 'Save me! Save me!' It was followed by the cries of many women. Hearing those cries, King Harishchandra shouted loudly- 'Don't be afraid' and dashed in the direction of the cries. The cries however were an illusion created by Vighnaraj, the lord of the obstacles. At that time when King Harishchandra heard those cries, sage Vishwamitra was observing severe penance in the forest. In order to test Harishchandra's virtuosity, Vighnaraj entered his body. As soon as Vighnaraj entered Harishchandra's body, Harishchandra lost his temper and began to abuse Vishwamitra, which enraged him. His anger destroyed all the knowledge, he had acquired due to his severe penance. Seeing the angry Vishwamitra, King Harishchandra began to shiver. With folded hands, he begged Vishwamitra's pardon. He said- 'O great sage! It is my duty to protect the subjects. Kindly forgive me. Your wrath could greatly affect the performance of my duties as a king. Vishwamitra said- 'O king! If you are a true follower of religion, tell me, who should be given a donation? Who should be protected and who should be fought with?' Harishchandra answered- 'O great penancer! Donations should be made only to such a Brahmin who indulges in fast and religious actions. Protection should be extended to those who are afraid and battle should be fought with enemies.'

Vishwamitra said- 'If you are a religious king, give me Dakshaina (donation) as I am a Brahmin seeking salvation.' Harishchandra said- 'Tell me your desire. I am ready to grant it. Vishwamitra said- 'O king! Just presume that I have received whatever you would donate me. Now, give me Dakshaina for the Rajsuya Yagya.'

Harishchandra said- 'Ask me whatever you wish to have as the Dakshaina of Rajsuya Yagya.' Vishwamitra said- 'O king! Give me all you have except your own body, your wife and child.' Feeling pleased, King Harishchandra granted what Vishwamitra desired. Vishwamitra said- 'O king! Tell me, who is the lord of your kingdom?' Harishchandra said- 'Since the moment I have presented this kingdom to you, you are its master.' Vishwamitra said- 'If I am the master of this kingdom, what are you doing here? Leave at once! But before leaving, remove all your clothes, ornaments and other royal insignia and go out wearing tree's bark only.'

Thus after losing his kingdom, King Harishchandra got ready to leave with his wife Shaivya and son Rohit. Vishwamitra then intercepted him and said- 'Where are you going without paying a Dakshaina for Rajsuya Yagya. Harishchandra said- 'O lord! I have donated my whole kingdom. Now only our bodies remain with us. What can I give you now?' Vishwamitra said- 'You cannot leave without paying a Dakshaina because you have promised me.' Harishchandra said- 'Don't be angry, O Brahmin! I have nothing at present in my position but I will definitely pay you your Dakshaina in due time.' Vishwamitra said angrily- 'Specify the time period within which you will give me my Dakshaina or else be ready to get cursed by me.' Harishchandra said- 'I will pay the Dakshaina within a month.' Thereafter, Harishchandra started to live in seclusion with his wife and children. Seeing the king's pitiable condition, his entire subjects began to follow him. Seeing their condition, Harishchandra halted and took a look on his subjects. At the same time, sage Vishwamitra also arrived there and began to curse Harishchandra for having attachment towards his subjects. Hearing the harsh words of Vishwamitra, Harishchandra left the kingdom with his

wife Shaivya and son Rohit. To drive the king away as soon as possible, Vishwamitra began to beat the queen's back with a stick.

Vishwamitra's abhorrent action enraged the five guardian deities of the

directions and they condemned him. Enraged Vishwamitra cursed them- 'O sinners! Go and take birth as human beings.' This curse of Vishwamitra frightened the deities. They begged his pardon. Pleased by their prayers, Vishwamitra said- 'My words cannot be undone. But despite having incarnation of human beings, you will remain bachelors throughout your life. You will never feel attachment and allurement for anybody.' Thus due to Vishwamitra's curse, those five guardian deities took birth as the five sons of Draupadi. Dronacharya's son, Ashwatthama, ultimately killed them.

wife Shaivya and son Rohit. To drive the king away as soon as possible, Vishwamitra began to beat the queen's back with a stick.

Vishwamitra's abhorrent action enraged the five guardian deities of the directions and they condemned him. Enraged Vishwamitra cursed them- 'O sinners! Go and take birth as human beings.' This curse of Vishwamitra frightened the deities. They begged his pardon. Pleased by their prayers, Vishwamitra said- 'My words cannot be undone. But despite having incarnation of human beings, you will remain bachelors throughout your life. You will never feel attachment and allurement for anybody.' Thus due to Vishwamitra's curse, those five guardian deities took birth as the five sons of Draupadi. Dronacharya's son, Ashwatthama, ultimately killed them.

KING HARISHCHANDRA

After being thrown out from his kingdom by Vishwamitra, Harishchandra reached the holy town of Varanasi, which was an abode of Lord

Mahadeva. There Harishchandra saw Vishwamitra standing before him. Vishwamitra said- 'A month has been completed now. Now, give me my Dakshaina.' Harishchandra said- 'There is still half an hour in the completion of this month. Please wait. I will give your Dakshaina.' Vishwamitra said- 'I will come after half an hour.' Saying this, Vishwamitra departed.

When Vishwamitra left, Harishchandra started to worry as to what would happen to him in his next birth if he did not keep his promise made to a Brahmin. Seeing him perplexed, queen Shaivya tried to console him. She said- 'Man requires a wife only to produce a child. Now we already have a child- Rohit. Hence I am no longer useful for you. You sell me and pay the acquired wealth as Dakshaina to the Brahmin.' Harishchandra fainted after hearing his wife's words. The queen began to wail at her husband's condition. Thus wailing, the queen also fell unconscious. The little Rohit also felt perplexed by his parent's condition. He began to cry- 'O father! O mother! I am hungry. Give me food.' At the same time, Vishwamitra arrived there in the guise of Kal. After sprinkling water on Harishchandra's face, he made him conscious and said- 'O king! Get up and pay my Dakshaina. Your sorrows will increase if you do not fulfil your promise.'

Harishchandra was regaining his consciousness slowly but seeing Vishwamitra he fainted once again. This further enraged Vishwamitra. He said- 'O king! If you have even slightest of respect for Dharma, give my Dakshaina at once. I will wait till evening and curse you if you fail to pay my Dakshaina.' Saying this Vishwamitra departed. The fear of the curse began to terrorise Harishchandra. Meanwhile the queen also regained consciousness. She once again insisted to sell her in order to pay the Dakshaina. This time, Harishchandra accepted her proposal and took the queen to the township. There addressing the crowd, he said- 'O dear citizens, kindly listen to me. I am selling my wife who is dearer to me than my own life. Anybody interested in buying her, please do so before evening.' An old Brahmin stepped forward from the crowd and said- 'I will buy her.' Hearing his words, Harishchandra became extremely sad that he could not even utter a word. The Brahmin then stuffed the money in the bark clothes of Harishchandra and began to drag the queen by her hair. The boy Rohit began to cry holding the hem of her mother. Seeing the condition of her son, the queen requested the Brahmin- 'O Arya!

Kindly let me see the face of my child for once.' Then the queen turned towards Rohit and said- 'O son! Your mother is no longer free now. She has become a slave. Do not touch me because I have become an untouchable.'

Then the old Brahmin began to forcibly drag the queen with him. Rohit also followed them crying loudly for his mother. The old Brahmin angrily kicked him. But still the boy did not give up following them. At last, the queen requested the Brahmin- 'O lord! I will not be able to serve you without my son. So kindly buy him also.' Hearing the words of the queen, the Brahmin once again stuffed some more money in the clothes of Harishchandra and tied the boy with the queen and began to drag both of them. Meanwhile Vishwamitra also appeared there and demanded the Dakshaina. Harishchandra gave him all the money he had got from selling his wife and son. Seeing that amount of money, Vishwamitra boiled with anger and said- 'O wretched among the Kshatriyas! You call this small amount of money as Dakshaina!

KING HARISHCHANDRA

After being thrown out from his kingdom by Vishwamitra, Harishchandra reached the holy town of Varanasi, which was an abode of Lord Mahadeva. There Harishchandra saw Vishwamitra standing before him. Vishwamitra said- 'A month has been completed now. Now, give me my Dakshaina.' Harishchandra said- 'There is still half an hour in the completion of this month. Please wait. I will give your Dakshaina.' Vishwamitra said- 'I will come after half an hour.' Saying this, Vishwamitra departed.

When Vishwamitra left, Harishchandra started to worry as to what would happen to him in his next birth if he did not keep his promise made to a Brahmin. Seeing him perplexed, queen Shaivya tried to console him. She said- 'Man requires a wife only to produce a child. Now we already have a child- Rohit. Hence I am no longer useful for you. You sell me and pay the acquired wealth as Dakshaina to the Brahmin.' Harishchandra fainted after hearing his wife's words. The queen began to wail at her husband's condition. Thus wailing, the queen also fell unconscious. The little Rohit also felt perplexed by his parent's condition. He began to cry- 'O father! O mother! I am hungry. Give me food.' At the same time, Vishwamitra arrived there in the guise of Kal. After sprinkling water on Harishchandra's face, he made him conscious and said- 'O king! Get up and pay my Dakshaina. Your sorrows will increase if you do not fulfil your promise.'

Harishchandra was regaining his consciousness slowly but seeing Vishwamitra he fainted once again. This further enraged Vishwamitra. He said- 'O king! If you have even slightest of respect for Dharma, give my Dakshaina at once. I will wait till evening and curse you if you fail to pay my Dakshaina.' Saying this Vishwamitra departed. The fear of the curse began to terrorise Harishchandra. Meanwhile the queen also regained consciousness. She once again insisted to sell her in order to pay the Dakshaina. This time, Harishchandra accepted her proposal and took the queen to the township. There addressing the crowd, he said- 'O dear citizens, kindly listen to me. I am selling my wife who is dearer to me than my own life. Anybody interested in buying her, please do so before evening.' An old Brahmin stepped forward from the crowd and said- 'I will buy her.' Hearing his words, Harishchandra became extremely sad that he could not even utter a word. The Brahmin then stuffed the money in the bark clothes of Harishchandra and began to drag the queen by her hair. The boy Rohit began to cry holding the hem of her mother. Seeing the condition of her son, the queen requested the Brahmin- 'O Arya! Kindly let me see the face of my child for once.' Then the queen turned towards Rohit and said- 'O son! Your mother is no longer free now. She has become a slave. Do not touch me because I have become an untouchable.'

Then the old Brahmin began to forcibly drag the queen with him. Rohit also followed them crying loudly for his mother. The old Brahmin angrily kicked him. But still the boy did not give up following them. At last, the queen requested the Brahmin- 'O lord! I will not be able to serve you without my son. So kindly buy him also.' Hearing the words of the queen, the Brahmin once again stuffed some more money in the clothes of Harishchandra and tied the boy with the queen and began to drag both of them. Meanwhile Vishwamitra also appeared there and demanded the Dakshaina. Harishchandra gave him all the money he had got from selling his wife and son. Seeing that amount of money, Vishwamitra boiled with anger and said- 'O wretched among the Kshatriyas! You call this small amount of money as Dakshaina!

Now look at the powers of my penance.' Harishchandra trembled with fear and said- 'O lord! Please wait a little more.' Vishwamitra said- 'Now only, a quarter of the day remains. I will wait only for this period and not more.' Saying this, Vishwamitra went away. With stooped face,

Harishchandra once again said addressing the crowd- 'Now I am available for sale. Whoever wishes to buy me, please come forward before sunset.' Dharma in the guise of a Chandala stepped forward from the crowd. He had a huge stinking body. He said- 'I will buy you.' Harishchandra asked- 'Who are you?' The Chandala said- 'I am a Chandala. My name is Praveer and I am the resident of this very town.' Harishchandra thought- 'It is better to accept the curse than accepting the slavery of a Chandala.' At the same time, Vishwamitra also arrived there and said angrily- 'This Chandala is ready to pay you a lot of money. Why don't you then pay my Dakshaina?' Harishchandra said- 'O lord! I am bom in Suryavansh. Accepting the slavery of a Chandala causes great pain for me. I have no money now. Since now onwards, I will be your slave and do whatever you will ask me to do.' Vishwamitra said- 'If you are my slave and ready to obey me, then I sell you to this Chandala for 1000 gold coins. Go and become his slave.' The Chandala then presented many villages that were spread over an area of 100 Yojans to Vishwamitra and tying Harishchandra with a rope dragged him to his town.

In the Chandala's house, Harishchandra contemplated- 'The queen must be thinking that I would soon get her freed from the slavery of the old Brahmin after paying his dues. But she does not know that I myself have become the slave of a Chandala.' After a few days, the Chandala appointed Harishchandra as the supervisor of the cremation place and instructed him to be there present all the time and to cremate each dead body only after thorough investigation. He also instructed him to collect the toll for cremating every dead body and divide it in such a way that one sixth part of the toll goes to the king and from the remaining five parts, three parts should be reserved for him he should take only the remaining two parts as his remuneration. Since that day, Harishchandra began to live in the cremation ground. He always remembered the glorious days of his kingdom, his queen and his son. He had great regret that just because of the anger of Vishwamitra, he lost everything. Very soon, his new found occupation began to show on his appearance. His hair grew long and was unkempt, his body dry and stinking. In this guise, he began to roam in the cremation ground always carrying a stick in his hand. His whole day passed in the assessment of the cremation toll and its division among the various claimants. He had lost his mental stature as he even forgot the count of the days and could not distinguish between the day and night.

One day, a snake bit Rohit as a result of which, he died. Shaivya brought Rohit, crying and wailing to the cremation ground. Even in the unkempt guise, she recognised Harishchandra. Hearing her wailing, Harishchandra went near her expecting to get the clothes of the deceased. There he saw a woman carrying a dead boy wrapped in a black cloth. He could not recognise queen Shaivya but the royal appearance of the boy forced him to think- 'To which royal family did this unfortunate boy belong to? How pitiable, the cruel Kal did not even spare this boy. My son Rohit would have attained the same age by now.' His silence further hurt the queen who said- 'O lord! O king! How come, you have been living here without caring for your wife and son? We have already lost our kingdom. Now, we have lost our son also. O destiny! Did you not destroy everything of Harishchandra?' Harishchandra began to think who that woman could be and who that dead boy was? 'Isn't she my wife?' Thus recognising his wife and dead son, Harishchandra began to cry loudly and fainted. The queen after seeing her husband's condition fainted too. After sometime both of them regained their consciousness. Then the king took the dead boy in his lap and once again fainted. Queen Shaivya began to wonder why Harishchandra was staying in the cremation ground. For a moment, she forgot her sorrow and began to look at her fainted husband. Then she noticed the stick in Harishchandra's hand. Usually Chandalas used to carry that kind of stick. She became dejected with the thought that she had become the wife of a Chandala.

Now look at the powers of my penance.' Harishchandra trembled with fear and said- 'O lord! Please wait a little more.' Vishwamitra said- 'Now only, a quarter of the day remains. I will wait only for this period and not more.' Saying this, Vishwamitra went away. With stooped face, Harishchandra once again said addressing the crowd- 'Now I am available for sale. Whoever wishes to buy me, please come forward before sunset.' Dharma in the guise of a Chandala stepped forward from the crowd. He had a huge stinking body. He said- 'I will buy you.' Harishchandra asked- 'Who are you?' The Chandala said- 'I am a Chandala. My name is Praveer and I am the resident of this very town.' Harishchandra thought- 'It is better to accept the curse than accepting the slavery of a Chandala.' At the same time, Vishwamitra also arrived there and said angrily- 'This Chandala is ready to pay you a lot of money. Why don't you then pay my Dakshaina?' Harishchandra said- 'O lord! I am born in Suryavansh. Accepting the slavery of a Chandala causes great pain for me. I have no money now. Since now onwards, I will be your slave and do whatever you will ask me to do.' Vishwamitra said- 'If you are my slave and ready to obey me, then I sell you to this Chandala for 1000 gold coins. Go and become his slave.' The Chandala then presented many villages that were spread over an area of 100 Yojans to Vishwamitra and tying Harishchandra with a rope dragged him to his town.

In the Chandala's house, Harishchandra contemplated- 'The queen must be thinking that I would soon get her freed from the slavery of the old Brahmin after paying his dues. But she does not know that I myself have become the slave of a Chandala.' After a few days, the Chandala appointed Harishchandra as the supervisor of the cremation place and instructed him to be there present all the time and to cremate each dead body only after thorough investigation. He also instructed him to collect the toll for cremating every dead body and divide it in such a way that one sixth part of the toll goes to the king and from the remaining five parts, three parts should be reserved for him he should take only the remaining two parts as his remuneration. Since that day, Harishchandra began to live in the cremation ground. He always remembered the glorious days of his kingdom, his queen and his son. He had great regret that just because of the anger of Vishwamitra, he lost everything. Very soon, his new found occupation began to show on his appearance. His hair grew long and was unkempt, his body dry and stinking. In this guise, he began to roam in the cremation ground always carrying a stick in his hand. His whole day passed in the assessment of the cremation toll and its division among the various claimants. He had lost his mental stature as he even forgot the count of the days and could not distinguish between the day and night.

One day, a snake bit Rohit as a result of which, he died. Shaivya brought Rohit, crying and wailing to the cremation ground. Even in the unkempt guise, she recognised Harishchandra. Hearing her wailing, Harishchandra went near her expecting to get the clothes of the deceased. There he saw a woman carrying a dead boy wrapped in a black cloth. He could not recognise queen Shaivya but the royal appearance of the boy forced him to think- 'To which royal family did this unfortunate boy belong to? How pitiable, the cruel Kal did not even spare this boy. My son Rohit would have attained the same age by now.' His silence further hurt the queen who said- 'O lord! O king! How come, you have been living here without caring for your wife and son? We have already lost our kingdom. Now, we have lost our son also. O destiny! Did you not destroy everything of Harishchandra?' Harishchandra began to think who that woman could be and who that dead boy was? 'Isn't she my wife?' Thus recognising his wife and dead son, Harishchandra began to cry loudly and fainted. The queen after seeing her husband's condition fainted too. After sometime both of them regained their consciousness. Then the king took the dead boy in his lap and once again fainted. Queen Shaivya began to wonder why Harishchandra was staying in the cremation ground. For a moment, she forgot her sorrow and began to look at her fainted husband. Then she noticed the stick in Harishchandra's hand. Usually Chandalas used to carry that kind of stick. She became dejected with the thought that she had become the wife of a Chandala.

She then began to curse the destiny and began to wail embracing King Harishchandra and said- 'o king! I don't know whether I am dreaming or it is a reality. I have lost the power of thinking.'

Hearing the words of the queen, the king opened his eyes and narrated the whole events that led to his becoming a Chandala. Then the queen narrated her experiences and how their son Rohit died because of snakebite. Harishchandra fell on the ground and began to hug his dead son. He was wailing- 'How unfortunate I am that even my wishes are not under my control. Without the permission of the Chandala, I cannot even commit self-immolation. But now, I will not differentiate between the sin and virtuosity. I will destroy my body in the pyre of my son.' The queen said- 'O king! I am also unable to bear the burden of sorrows. I will also commit immolation with you. Then all three of us will stay unitedly in the heaven. It won't matter to us even if we suffer the tortures of hell.' Then the king arranged a huge pyre and put his dead son on it. With the queen, he began to pray to God. Just then all the deities arrived there led by Dharma. Sage Vishwamitra also accompanied them. They praised Harishchandra. Then Dharma, Indra and Vishwamitra came closer to the king.

Dharma said- 'O king! You have satisfied me with your merits like patience, endurance, truthfulness etc.' Indra said- Harishchandra, you are very fortunate. You have won our hearts along with your wife and son. You have even won the heaven with your action. I invite you to stay in heaven along with your wife and son.' Then Indra sprinkled ambrosia on the dead Rohit. Rohit got up and sat up in no time. Harishchandra, his wife and son Rohit were clad in divine clothes and garlands. Indra invited them to stay in the heaven forever but Harishchandra said- 'O king of the deities! Without the permission of this Chandala, I cannot go anywhere.

Dharma said- 'O king! I had learnt in advance about the miseries you would suffer in future. That's why I took the guise of a Chandala and showed you all the grotesque action.' Indra once again invited them to heaven but once again, Harishchandra refused saying that in Koshal, people must have been living mournfully in his absence. 'I cannot leave them in that pitiable condition to enjoy the comforts of the heaven', said Harishchandra. Then, Indra, Dharma and Vishwamitra led Harishchandra to Ayodhya, the capital of Koshal. There they carried out the coronation of Rohit. Thereafter, they took Harishchandra and his queen Shaivya to the heaven.

She then began to curse the destiny and began to wail embracing King Harishchandra and said- 'O king! I don't know whether I am dreaming or it is a reality. I have lost the power of thinking.'

Hearing the words of the queen, the king opened his eyes and narrated the whole events that led to his becoming a Chandala. Then the queen narrated her experiences and how their son Rohit died because of snakebite. Harishchandra fell on the ground and began to hug his dead son. He was wailing- 'How unfortunate I am that even my wishes are not under my control. Without the permission of the Chandala, I cannot even commit self-immolation. But now, I will not differentiate between the sin and virtuosity. I will destroy my body in the pyre of my son.' The queen said- 'O king! I am also unable to bear the burden of sorrows. I will also commit immolation with you. Then all three of us will stay unitedly in the heaven. It won't matter to us even if we suffer the tortures of hell.' Then the king arranged a huge pyre and put his dead son on it. With the queen, he began to pray to God. Just then all the deities arrived there led by Dharma. Sage Vishwamitra also accompanied them. They praised Harishchandra. Then Dharma, Indra and Vishwamitra came closer to the king.

Dharma said- 'O king! You have satisfied me with your merits like patience, endurance, truthfulness etc.' Indra said- 'Harishchandra, you are very fortunate. You have won our hearts along with your wife and son. You have even won the heaven with your action. I invite you to stay in heaven along with your wife and son.' Then Indra sprinkled ambrosia on the dead Rohit. Rohit got up and sat up in no time. Harishchandra, his wife and son Rohit were clad in divine clothes and garlands. Indra invited them to stay in the heaven forever but Harishchandra said- 'O king of the deities! Without the permission of this Chandala, I cannot go anywhere.

'Dharma said- 'O king! I had learnt in advance about the miseries you would suffer in future. That's why I took the guise of a Chandala and showed you all the grotesque action.' Indra once again invited them to heaven but once again, Harishchandra refused saying that in Koshal, people must have been living mournfully in his absence. 'I cannot leave them in that pitiable condition to enjoy the comforts of the heaven', said Harishchandra. Then, Indra, Dharma and Vishwamitra led Harishchandra to Ayodhya, the capital of Koshal. There they carried out the coronation of Rohit. Thereafter, they took Harishchandra and his queen Shaivya to the heaven.

THE STORK AND THE PARTRIDGE

The birds say- O great sage Jaimini! When, King Harishchandra attained his heavenly abode, their family priest, sage Vashishta re-emerged from

water. He came to know about the entire development. He was angry at Vishwamitra's stubbornness. He at once cursed Vishwamitra to become a stork.

On the other hand Vishwamitra cursed Vashishta to become a partridge. Thus both of them turned into birds and began to fight. Their fight caused great panic all around. At last accompanied by the deities, Brahma himself arrived at the scene and dissuaded the birds from fighting. But Brahma could not convince them and they continued to fight.

Brahma then destroyed their avian appearances and both the sages regained their original form. Their enemity too ended at the same time. Brahma explained to them that Vishwamitra had not done any harm to Harishchandra. In fact he had felicitated Harishchandra's ascend to the heaven. Both the sages felt ashamed and they embraced each other before leaving for their respective hermitages.

The birds say- O great sage Jaimini! When, King Harishchandra attained his heavenly abode, their family priest, sage Vashishta re-emerged from water. He came to know about the entire development. He was angry at Vishwamitra's stubbornness. He at once cursed Vishwamitra to become a stork.

On the other hand Vishwamitra cursed Vashishta to become a partridge. Thus both of them turned into birds and began to fight. Their fight caused great panic all around. At last accompanied by the deities, Brahma himself arrived at the scene and dissuaded the birds from fighting. But Brahma could not convince them and they continued to fight.

Brahma then destroyed their avian appearances and both the sages regained their original form. Their enemity too ended at the same time. Brahma explained to them that Vishwamitra had not done any harm to Harishchandra. In fact he had felicitated Harishchandra's ascend to the heaven. Both the sages felt ashamed and they embraced each other before leaving for their respective hermitages.

THE STORK AND THE PARTRIDGE

The birds say- O great sage Jaimini! When, King Harishchandra attained his heavenly abode, their family priest, sage Vashishta re-emerged from water. He came to know about the entire development. He was angry at Vishwamitra's stubbornness. He at once cursed Vishwamitra to become a stork.

On the other hand Vishwamitra cursed Vashishta to become a partridge. Thus both of them turned into birds and began to fight. Their fight caused great panic all around. At last accompanied by the deities, Brahma himself arrived at the scene and dissuaded the birds from fighting. But Brahma could not convince them and they continued to fight.

Brahma then destroyed their avian appearances and both the sages regained their original form. Their enemity too ended at the same time. Brahma explained to them that Vishwamitra had not done any harm to Harishchandra. In fact he had felicitated Harishchandra's ascend to the heaven. Both the sages felt ashamed and they embraced each other before leaving for their respective hermitages.

The birds say- O great sage Jaimini! When, King Harishchandra attained his heavenly abode, their family priest, sage Vashishta re-emerged from water. He came to know about the entire development. He was angry at Vishwamitra's stubbornness. He at once cursed Vishwamitra to become a stork.

On the other hand Vishwamitra cursed Vashishta to become a partridge. Thus both of them turned into birds and began to fight. Their fight caused great panic all around. At last accompanied by the deities, Brahma himself arrived at the scene and dissuaded the birds from fighting. But Brahma could not convince them and they continued to fight.

Brahma then destroyed their avian appearances and both the sages regained their original form. Their enemity too ended at the same time. Brahma explained to them that Vishwamitra had not done any harm to Harishchandra. In fact he had felicitated Harishchandra's ascend to the heaven. Both the sages felt ashamed and they embraced each other before leaving for their respective hermitages.

BIRTH OF LIVING CREATURES

Jaimini says- O great birds, how does a living being take birth? How does it grow in the womb bearing all the pain? How does it grow after taking

birth? What happens to the soul after death? How does it experience the fruits of his Karmas? The greatest surprise is how does a little foetus survive in the womb. Kindly clear all these doubts.

Birds say- Once upon a time, a Brahmin lived along with his son- Sumati. One day, the Brahmin instructed Sumati to study Vedas under the tutelage of a teacher and himself went to the forest to attain Brahmagyan- the knowledge which frees the soul from transmigration. But due to his laziness, Sumati did not pay heed to his father. When his father repeated his instruction, he simply laughed and said- 'O father! I know everything. I have studied all the Vedas in my various births. I have experienced the darkness of mother's belly for many times. I have suffered thousand kinds of diseases in my previous lives. I have experienced the authority as well as slavery in my previous births. I had killed as well as got killed by others. Hence, I feel, I have all the knowledge and I am sure that I will definitely attain Brahmapad.' Sumati's father was pleased at his son's claims and asked him how he attained such virtuosity.

Sumati said- 'O father! I was a Brahmin in my previous birth. I had attained the designation of Acharya. After sometime, I became a recluse. I was blessed with an extraordinary memory, which I retained even after my death. This is the reason why I remember the self knowledge attained in my previous birth. With the support of this knowledge and religious virtues, I will attempt to attain salvation. Tell me what you expect from me. I will try to fulfil your expectations.' The Brahmin then asked many questions related to life and death. Sumati explained those queries thus:

Those who never tell a lie, who have faith and devotion, only such people die peacefully. Whoever's mind is free from the evils like Kama, Krodh, Moha, Dwesh etc. (lust, anger, affection, jealousy etc.) and who are altruistic in nature and make donations liberally die in peace. Those who lack these virtues suffer great pain at the time of death. As soon as such people sight Yamadoot they begin to cry and call their relatives. But their relatives do not understand their calls. Then the dying person turns away his eyes and grasps for breath. He feels great pain when his soul leaves his body. Even after death, sufferings of such people do not end. They have to undergo scores of tortures in hell. Those who donate umbrella, shoes, clothes and cereals attain heaven. The sinners on the other hand pass through different hells and take birth as inferior creature in their

next lives. After continuous transmigration through lower life forms, these sinners once again take birth as human beings but are imperfect. They remain dwarf, hunched or have any other deformity. Then they pass through all the four castes- Shudra, Vaishya, Kshatriya and Brahmin classes. As their action improves, they might even attain the position of Indra.'

BIRTH OF LIVING CREATURES

Jaimini says- O great birds, how does a living being take birth? How does it grow in the womb bearing all the pain? How does it grow after taking birth? What happens to the soul after death? How does it experience the fruits of his Karmas? The greatest surprise is how does a little foetus survive in the womb. Kindly clear all these doubts.

Birds say- Once upon a time, a Brahmin lived along with his son- Sumati. One day, the Brahmin instructed Sumati to study Vedas under the tutelage of a teacher and himself went to the forest to attain Brahmagyan- the knowledge which frees the soul from transmigration. But due to his laziness, Sumati did not pay heed to his father. When his father repeated his instruction, he simply laughed and said- 'O father! I know everything. I have studied all the Vedas in my various births. I have experienced the darkness of mother's belly for many times. I have suffered thousand kinds of diseases in my previous lives. I have experienced the authority as well as slavery in my previous births. I had killed as well as got killed by others. Hence, I feel, I have all the knowledge and I am sure that I will definitely attain Brahmapad.' Sumati's father was pleased at his son's claims and asked him how he attained such virtuosity.

Sumati said- 'O father! I was a Brahmin in my previous birth. I had attained the designation of Acharya. After sometime, I became a recluse. I was blessed with an extraordinary memory, which I retained even after my death. This is the reason why I remember the self knowledge attained in my previous birth. With the support of this knowledge and religious virtues, I will attempt to attain salvation. Tell me what you expect from me. I will try to fulfil your expectations.' The Brahmin then asked many questions related to life and death. Sumati explained those queries thus:

Those who never tell a lie, who have faith and devotion, only such people die peacefully. Whoever's mind is free from the evils like Kama, Krodh, Moha, Dwesh etc. (lust, anger, affection, jealousy etc.) and who are altruistic in nature and make donations liberally die in peace. Those who lack these virtues suffer great pain at the time of death. As soon as such people sight Yamadoot they begin to cry and call their relatives. But their relatives do not understand their calls. Then the dying person turns away his eyes and grasps for breath. He feels great pain when his soul leaves his body. Even after death, sufferings of such people do not end. They have to undergo scores of tortures in hell. Those who donate umbrella, shoes, clothes and cereals attain heaven. The sinners on the other hand pass through different hells and take birth as inferior creature in their next lives. After continuous transmigration through lower life forms, these sinners once again take birth as human beings but are imperfect. They remain dwarf, hunched or have any other deformity. Then they pass through all the four castes- Shudra, Vaishya, Kshatriya and Brahmin classes. As their action improves, they might even attain the position of Indra.'

DESCRIPTION OF DIFFERENT HEFFS

INTRODUCTION

The Brahmin says- O son! Describe in detail about hell.

Sumati says- O father! Yamadoots carry and lynch those people who eat inedible things, who deceive and dishonor their friends, who indulge in illicit relationships, who desert their wife, and who destroy public properties like garden, water sources etc. Yamadoots tie hands and legs of such people and throw them into the fire. On their way to hell, such people are bitten by crows, storks, wolves, vultures etc. They stay in the inferno for thousand years.

Then they are shifted to another hell named Tama, which is always shrouded in darkness. Sinners who kill the cows and their brothers are thrown into this hell. They panic due to darkness and extreme cold. They get nothing to eat and drink. Moreover, chilling winds aggravates their miseries by making their bones stiff. These sinners then drink their own blood and eat their own flesh. They stay there until all their sins have been attenuated completely.

Then they are thrown into yet another hell named Nikrintan, which revolves like the wheel of a potter. Hoisting the sinners on the wheel, Yamadoots cut their organs but still their sufferings do not end because the cut organs rejoin and get cut repeatedly. This continues for thousand of years. Then the sinners are put in Aprathisth hell where they experience unbearable sorrow and miseries. The sinners are then put in Chakrasankar hell where they are tormented with wheels and huge bells. They are disembowelled and their eyes are also pricked. The sinners have to pass through different hells namely Asipatra, Taptakumbha and Lohakumbha.

DESCRIPTION OF DIFFERENT HELLS

INTRODUCTION

The Brahmin says- O son! Describe in detail about hell.

Sumati says- O father! Yamadoots carry and lynch those people who eat inedible things, who deceive and dishonor their friends, who indulge in illicit relationships, who desert their wife, and who destroy public properties like garden, water sources etc. Yamadoots tie hands and legs of such people and throw them into the fire. On their way to hell, such people are bitten by crows, storks, wolves, vultures etc. They stay in the inferno for thousand years.

Then they are shifted to another hell named Tama, which is always shrouded in darkness. Sinners who kill the cows and their brothers are thrown into this hell. They panic due to darkness and extreme cold. They get nothing to eat and drink. Moreover, chilling winds aggravates their miseries by making their bones stiff. These sinners then drink their own blood and eat their own flesh. They stay there until all their sins have been attenuated completely.

Then they are thrown into yet another hell named Nikrintan, which revolves like the wheel of a potter. Hoisting the sinners on the wheel, Yamadoots cut their organs but still their sufferings do not end because the cut organs rejoin and get cut repeatedly. This continues for thousand of years. Then the sinners are put in Aprathisth hell where they experience unbearable sorrow and miseries. The sinners are then put in Chakrasankar hell where they are tormented with wheels and huge bells. They are disembowelled and their eyes are also pricked. The sinners have to pass through different hells namely Asipatra, Taptakumbha and Lohakumbha.

YAMADOOT AND THE KING OF VIDEHA

Sumati says-1 was born in a Vaishya family, seven births before this present one. In that birth, I once prevented cows from drinking water. As

a result of this sin, I was thrown in the hell named Damn where I spent one hundred years without a drop of water.

Suddenly one day, cool pleasant wind began to blow, its cool touch gave some relief to me. I saw that a Yamadoot was guiding a gentle looking man. Besides me, all the inmates of the hell felt extreme joy by the sight of that gentleman. The gentleman was asking that Yamadoot as to why he was being taken to the hell. From the words of that gentleman, it appeared that he was a renowned scholar. That man was in fact the ruler of a kingdom named Videha and was popular as the fosterer of his subjects.

YAMADOOT AND THE KING OF VIDEHA

Sumati says- I was born in a Vaishya family, seven births before this present one. In that birth, I once prevented cows from drinking water. As a result of this sin, I was thrown in the hell named Darun where I spent one hundred years without a drop of water.

Suddenly one day, cool pleasant wind began to blow, its cool touch gave some relief to me. I saw that a Yamadoot was guiding a gentle looking man. Besides me, all the inmates of the hell felt extreme joy by the sight of that gentleman. The gentleman was asking that Yamadoot as to why he was being taken to the hell. From the words of that gentleman, it appeared that he was a renowned scholar. That man was in fact the ruler of a kingdom named Videha and was popular as the fosterer of his subjects.

Description Of Tortures In Hell

Thus asked by the gentleman, Yamadoots replied politely- 'O king! You once deliberately prevented your wife Pivari from conceiving because you

were more attracted to your second wife- Sushobhana. It is because of that action that you have been brought here to undergo severe torture.' The religious minded king said-' I am willing to go where ever you want to take me, but before doing that I would like to have answers to my questions. I see many people undergoing severe tortures in this hell. Big and frightening crows prick their eyes. Tell me, for what sin they are facing such tortures.'

Yamadoot said- 'O king! Humans suffer or enjoy according to their Karmas. The effect of their Karmas diminishes in proportion to their sufferings. These crows are pricking the eyes of such people who had seduced other women and deceitfully acquired others' wealth. These people will suffer for the same number of years as their eyes blinked during the leering. These crows prick the tongues of those people who had criticised Vedas, deities, Brahmins and teachers. Those who caused differences between friends, husband-wives, father and sons and relatives, or killed the performer of the Yagyas are suffering under the saw. Those who insulted their parents and teachers have been thrown in the pit of pus, faeces and other excretions with their head down. Those who had food before offering it to the deities, guests, servants, father and elders, fire and birds, stay in a pit of pus. Iron nails are hammered into the ears of those people who gleefully heard the criticism of creatures, deities, Brahmins and Vedas. Those who remarried their daughters to another person despite her former husband being alive are cut into pieces and thrown into a saline river. Those who betrayed their friends are tied tightly with a rope. Worms, scorpion, crows and owls then bite their bodies. Those who enjoyed carnal intimacy during daytime or had illicit relations with women are hammered with nails to a prickly Bombax tree. Those who insulted Vedas and fire are thrown from the lofty peaks of mountain. O king! Those who steal gold, those who kill Brahmin, those who drink wine and those who rape the wife of their teacher are burnt in fire.'

Description Of Tortures In Hell

Thus asked by the gentleman, Yamadoots replied politely- 'O king! You once deliberately prevented your wife Pivari from conceiving because you were more attracted to your second wife- Sushobhana. It is because of that action that you have been brought here to undergo severe torture.' The religious minded king said- ' I am willing to go where ever you want to take me, but before doing that I would like to have answers to my questions. I see many people undergoing severe tortures in this hell. Big and frightening crows prick their eyes. Tell me, for what sin they are facing such tortures.'

Yamadoot said- 'O king! Humans suffer or enjoy according to their Karmas. The effect of their Karmas diminishes in proportion to their sufferings. These crows are pricking the eyes of such people who had seduced other women and deceitfully acquired others' wealth. These people will suffer for the same number of years as their eyes blinked during the leering. These crows prick the tongues of those people who had criticised Vedas, deities, Brahmins and teachers. Those who caused differences between friends, husband-wives, father and sons and relatives, or killed the performer of the Yagyas are suffering under the saw. Those who insulted their parents and teachers have been thrown in the pit of pus, faeces and other excretions with their head down. Those who had food before offering it to the deities, guests, servants, father and elders, fire and birds, stay in a pit of pus. Iron nails are hammered into the ears of those people who gleefully heard the criticism of creatures, deities, Brahmins and Vedas. Those who remarried their daughters to another person despite her former husband being alive are cut into pieces and thrown into a saline river. Those who betrayed their friends are tied tightly with a rope. Worms, scorpion, crows and owls then bite their bodies. Those who enjoyed carnal intimacy during daytime or had illicit relations with women are hammered with nails to a prickly Bombax tree. Those who insulted Vedas and fire are thrown from the lofty peaks of mountain. O king! Those who steal gold, those who kill Brahmin, those who drink wine and those who rape the wife of their teacher are burnt in fire.'

Attenuation Of Sins

Yamadoot says- As a result of accepting money from a degraded person, a Brahmin takes birth as an ass. A Brahmin who carries out Yagya for a

degraded person takes birth as worm after undergoing severe sufferings in different types of hell. A person takes birth as an ass or an inferior bird as a result of abusing his parents. A person who does not worship his tutelary god before eating takes birth as a monkey. Traitors take birth as fish. Those who steal cereals take birth as mice. A Shudra, who manages to establish intimacy with a Brahmin woman, takes birth as a worm. Similarly, killers of woman and children also take birth as worms. Ungrateful people take birth as worm, insects, grasshoppers, scorpion, crows etc. Encroacher of land takes birth as grass shrubs, creepers and inferior trees. Butchers who kill bulls take birth as eunuchs. Thus a person has to face the result of his Karma according to the gravity of his sins.

Sumati says- As Yamadoot began to push the king ahead, all the creatures in hell gave a loud cry- 'O king! Please stay here for few more moments. The wind that blows towards us after touching your body gives us immense joy. This wind has ended our sufferings and pains. Have pity on us.' The king asked the Yamadoot- 'Why are these people so joyous by my presence? Yamadoot said- 'O king! Initially, you used to sustain your body by the leftovers of the deities, ancestors, guests and ascetics. This is the reason why the wind that blows touching your body causing such pleasure to these people.

'The king said- 'If I can eliminate the sufferings of these sinners merely by standing here, I will definitely stay here.' Yamadoot said- 'No, you cannot stay here. It is a place for the sinners only. Come with us. You will have to enjoy the pleasure of your pious action.' The king said- 'No, I will not go anywhere leaving these poor people in this pitiable condition.' Yamadoot said- 'O king! Look, Dharma and Indra have themselves arrived to escort you to the heaven.

'Dharma said- 'O king! You have worshipped me. Hence follow me to the heaven.' The king replied- 'No, I will not go anywhere leaving these thousands of people in the hell.' Indra said- 'Everyone has to taste the fruits of his Karmas. You cannot help them.' The king said- 'o Indra! Tell me, how virtuous was I in my previous life?' Dharma said-1 Though your pious actions are fathomless, be sure that their significance are not much than drops of water in an ocean, the stars in the sky. The kindness you have shown towards these sinners has further enhanced your virtuosity.'

The king said- 'If it is so, may all these people be released from their sufferings by the virtue of my good Karmas.' Indra said- 'O king! By your words, your pious action has increased like the height of the mountain and these sinners have also been released from their sufferings.'

Attenuation Of Sins

Yamadoot says- As a result of accepting money from a degraded person, a Brahmin takes birth as an ass. A Brahmin who carries out Yagya for a degraded person takes birth as worm after undergoing severe sufferings in different types of hell. A person takes birth as an ass or an inferior bird as a result of abusing his parents. A person who does not worship his tutelary god before eating takes birth as a monkey. Traitors take birth as fish. Those who steal cereals take birth as mice. A Shudra, who manages to establish intimacy with a Brahmin woman, takes birth as a worm. Similarly, killers of woman and children also take birth as worms. Ungrateful people take birth as worm, insects, grasshoppers, scorpion, crows etc. Encroacher of land takes birth as grass shrubs, creepers and inferior trees. Butchers who kill bulls take birth as eunuchs. Thus a person has to face the result of his Karma according to the gravity of his sins.

Sumati says- As Yamadoot began to push the king ahead, all the creatures in hell gave a loud cry- 'O king! Please stay here for few more moments. The wind that blows towards us after touching your body gives us immense joy. This wind has ended our sufferings and pains. Have pity on us.' The king asked the Yamadoot- 'Why are these people so joyous by my presence? Yamadoot said- 'O king! Initially, you used to sustain your body by the leftovers of the deities, ancestors, guests and ascetics. This is the reason why the wind that blows touching your body causing such pleasure to these people.

'The king said- 'If I can eliminate the sufferings of these sinners merely by standing here, I will definitely stay here.' Yamadoot said- 'No, you cannot stay here. It is a place for the sinners only. Come with us. You will have to enjoy the pleasure of your pious action.' The king said- 'No, I will not go anywhere leaving these poor people in this pitiable condition.' Yamadoot said- 'O king! Look, Dharma and Indra have themselves arrived to escort you to the heaven.

'Dharma said- 'O king! You have worshipped me. Hence follow me to the heaven.' The king replied- 'No, I will not go anywhere leaving these thousands of people in the hell.' Indra said- 'Everyone has to taste the fruits of his Karmas. You cannot help them.' The king said- 'O Indra! Tell me, how virtuous was I in my previous life?' Dharma said- ' Though your pious actions are fathomless, be sure that their significance are not much than drops of water in an ocean, the stars in the sky. The kindness you have shown towards these sinners has further enhanced your virtuosity.' The king said- 'If it is so, may all these people be released from their sufferings by the virtue of my good Karmas.' Indra said- 'O king! By your words, your pious action has increased like the height of the mountain and these sinners have also been released from their sufferings.'

FAMOUS MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS BEING CHASTE AND BIRTH OF DURVASA, DATTATREYA, CHANDRAMA

Brahmin says- O son! Tell me, what should I do now?

Sumati says- Now, you should become a Vanprasthi and lead a life of a Bhikshu by having control over your senses. You will attain that rare Yoga, which helps a man to unite with the almighty after freeing him from the cycles of birth, death and rebirth.

Brahmin says- O son! Now explain to me about this Yoga, which bestows liberation to a man.

Sumati says-1 am now describing to you, the same text related with Yoga that was once narrated by Dattatreya to Alarka.

The Brahmin asked Sumati- Who was Dattatreya's father? How did he acquire the knowledge of Yoga? Who was Alarka?

Sumati says- In ancient Pratisthanpur (modem Paithan) there lived a Brahmin. He was inflicted by leprosy because of the sins he had committed in his previous birth. The Brahmin was very short-tempered and used to scoff at his wife frequently. But his wife was very chaste in character and worshipped him like a deity. One day, the Brahmin ordered his wife to carry him to the prostitute's house, as he had become too weak and feeble. Being chaste, the wife collected some money and began to carry the Brahmin on her shoulders to the home of the prostitute. On their way, they reached a place where sage Mandavya was hanged but still was alive. In the darkness, the woman could not see the things clearly and the Brahmin who was riding her shoulders happened to touch the sage. The sage cursed angrily that whoever had touched him would die before sunrise. Hearing the words of the sage, the Brahmin's wife thundered that there would be no sunrise tomorrow.

Words of the woman came to be true as next morning, the Sun did not rise. Thus the whole world was shrouded in darkness as a result of which, the deities became worried. The deities apprehended that without the occurrence of sunrise, the whole universe might be destroyed. They were also worried that without the differentiation of day and night, how could the months be calculated and the seasons known. Even the calculation of

year would be impossible. The chastity of Brahmins wife had forced even the mighty sun to eschew its daily routine. As a result of this, religious activities like Havan, Yagya etc. also came to a halt. Seeing them perplexed, Brahma advised the deities to eulogise Ansuya, the wife of sage Atri. All the deities then pleased Ansuya who assured them to convince the wife of the Brahmin to retract her words. After that, Ansuya reached the Brahmin's hut and said to his wife- 'O fortunate one! May you always serve your husband with full dedication. A chaste woman enjoys half the virtues of her husband, which he earns by his religious activities.'

Brahmini said- 'I am blessed today that the deities have at last glanced at me. Now, tell me, what should I do?' Ansuya said- 'O Sadhvi! In the absence of the day, all the religious activities have ceased to exist. The world is on the verge of extinction. Only your wish can protect the world from imminent calamity. Hence, be pleased now and allow the Sun to rise as usual.' Brahmini said- 'O fortunate one! Sage Mandavya had cursed that my husband would die with sunrise.

Brahmin says- O son! Tell me, what should I do now?

Sumati says- Now, you should become a Vanprasthi and lead a life of a Bhikshu by having control over your senses. You will attain that rare Yoga, which helps a man to unite with the almighty after freeing him from the cycles of birth, death and rebirth.

Brahmin says- O son! Now explain to me about this Yoga, which bestows liberation to a man.

Sumati says- I am now describing to you, the same text related with Yoga that was once narrated by Dattatreya to Alarka.

The Brahmin asked Sumati- Who was Dattatreya's father? How did he acquire the knowledge of Yoga? Who was Alarka?

Sumati says- In ancient Pratisthanpur (modern Paithan) there lived a Brahmin. He was inflicted by leprosy because of the sins he had committed in his previous birth. The Brahmin was very short-tempered and used to scoff at his wife frequently. But his wife was very chaste in character and worshipped him like a deity. One day, the Brahmin ordered his wife to carry him to the prostitute's house, as he had become too weak and feeble. Being chaste, the wife collected some money and began to carry the Brahmin on her shoulders to the home of the prostitute. On their way, they reached a place where sage Mandavya was hanged but still was alive. In the darkness, the woman could not see the things clearly and the Brahmin who was riding her shoulders happened to touch the sage. The sage cursed angrily that whoever had touched him would die before sunrise. Hearing the words of the sage, the Brahmin's wife thundered that there would be no sunrise tomorrow.

Words of the woman came to be true as next morning, the Sun did not rise. Thus the whole world was shrouded in darkness as a result of which, the deities became worried. The deities apprehended that without the occurrence of sunrise, the whole universe might be destroyed. They were also worried that without the differentiation of day and night, how could the months be calculated and the seasons known. Even the calculation of year would be impossible. The chastity of Brahmins wife had forced even the mighty sun to eschew its daily routine. As a result of this, religious activities like Havan, Yagya etc. also came to a halt. Seeing them perplexed, Brahma advised the deities to eulogise Ansuya, the wife of sage Atri. All the deities then pleased Ansuya who assured them to convince the wife of the Brahmin to retract her words. After that, Ansuya reached the Brahmin's hut and said to his wife- 'O fortunate one! May you always serve your husband with full dedication. A chaste woman enjoys half the virtues of her husband, which he earns by his religious activities.'

Brahmini said- 'I am blessed today that the deities have at last glanced at me. Now, tell me, what should I do?' Ansuya said- 'O Sadhvi! In the absence of the day, all the religious activities have ceased to exist. The world is on the verge of extinction. Only your wish can protect the world from imminent calamity. Hence, be pleased now and allow the Sun to rise as usual.' Brahmini said- 'O fortunate one! Sage Mandavya had cursed that my husband would die with sunrise.

I cannot afford to lose my husband.' Ansuya said- 'Don't worry, O chaste woman! I will resurrect your husband. So, kindly allow the Sun to rise now.'

Then, Ansuya invoked the Sun by offering water as an oblation. However, the leper-inflicted Brahmin died as soon as the Sun rose. Then by the powers of her penance, Ansuya resurrected the Brahmin and transformed him into a disease-free handsome young man. She also blessed the couple to live for hundred years. The deities were pleased with Ansuya and asked her to seek a boon. Ansuya expressed her desire to give birth to the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh as her sons. The trinity blessed her with this boon. In due course of time, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh took birth as Chandrama, Dattatreya and Durvasa from Ansuya.

I cannot afford to lose my husband.' Ansuya said- 'Don't worry, O chaste woman! I will resurrect your husband. So, kindly allow the Sun to rise now.'

Then, Ansuya invoked the Sun by offering water as an oblation. However, the leper-inflicted Brahmin died as soon as the Sun rose. Then by the powers of her penance, Ansuya resurrected the Brahmin and transformed him into a disease-free handsome young man. She also blessed the couple to live for hundred years. The deities were pleased with Ansuya and asked her to seek a boon. Ansuya expressed her desire to give birth to the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh as her sons. The trinity blessed her with this boon. In due course of time, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh took birth as Chandrama, Dattatreya and Durvasa from Ansuya.

DATTATREYA'S PREACHES KARTAVEERYA ARJUNA

Sumati says- O father! After the demise of Kartaveerya, his ministers and priests decided to crown his son Arjuna as their new king. But Arjuna

refused saying that he would not become the king unless and until he had attained the status of a Yogi. Sage Garg then advised Arjuna to worship Dattatreya who had helped the deities to reunite after the defeat of the demons.

Afterwards, Arjuna migrated to Dattatreya's hermitage and began to worship and serve him. Pleased by his penance and service, Dattatreya asked Arjuna to seek a boon. Arjuna said- 'O lord! Kindly bless me with such a power, which enables me to perform my duties as a king in a just manner. May nobody match me in war and may I have one thousand arms. I wish to get killed only by such a person who is more virtuous than me and may I guide the people towards the right path. May nobody in my kingdom remain poor and may my devotion for your lotus feet be eternal.' Dattatreya said- 'O son! All of your wishes shall come true. With my blessings, you shall rule over all the four directions.' Then, Dattatreya crowned Arjuna as the king. Large number of people witnessed his crowning ceremony. Soon after becoming the king, Kartaveerya Arjuna ordered that nobody in his kingdom should wield a weapon except him.

DATTATREYA'S PREACHES KARTAVEERYA ARJUNA

Sumati says- O father! After the demise of Kartaveerya, his ministers and priests decided to crown his son Arjuna as their new king. But Arjuna refused saying that he would not become the king unless and until he had attained the status of a Yogi. Sage Garg then advised Arjuna to worship Dattatreya who had helped the deities to reunite after the defeat of the demons.

Afterwards, Arjuna migrated to Dattatreya's hermitage and began to worship and serve him. Pleased by his penance and service, Dattatreya asked Arjuna to seek a boon. Arjuna said- 'O lord! Kindly bless me with such a power, which enables me to perform my duties as a king in a just manner. May nobody match me in war and may I have one thousand arms. I wish to get killed only by such a person who is more virtuous than me and may I guide the people towards the right path. May nobody in my kingdom remain poor and may my devotion for your lotus feet be eternal.' Dattatreya said- 'O son! All of your wishes shall come true. With my blessings, you shall rule over all the four directions.' Then, Dattatreya crowned Arjuna as the king. Large number of people witnessed his crowning ceremony. Soon after becoming the king, Kartaveerya Arjuna ordered that nobody in his kingdom should wield a weapon except him.

KUVALAYASHVA AND THE HORSE KUVALAYA

Sumati says- O father! Now listen to the tale of a Brahmin named Alarka. Long ago, there lived a king named Shatrujit who had a meritorious son,

Ritudhwaj. Prince Ritudhwaj had many friends with whom he used to play with. In course of time, two sons of Ashwatar, the king of Nagas became his friends in the guise of Brahmin boys. Both of them were young and good-looking. Both of them used to pass the entire day in the company of Ritudhwaj. They would return to their abode in Patal loka only at night. On being enquired by their father, they revealed the reason about their late arrival at home. They said- 'O father! Up there on the land, there is a prince named Ritudhwaj. He is the son of King Shatrujit. He is very handsome, gentle, brave, truthful, knowledgeous and meritorious. We enjoy his company.' Ashwatar said- 'Prince Ritudhwaj is really blessed for even the meritorious people like you praise him. But have you done anything to make him happy?' His sons asked- 'What can we do for his pleasure? We find ourselves incapable of pleasing such a person whose riches are even rare for Patal loka.' Ashwatar said- 'Even then, I wish to hear about the characteristics of your new friend.'

The sons said- O father! Once the prince narrated us a tale, we are going to relate it now. A Brahmin named Galav lived in King Shatrujits kingdom. One day, he arrived in the court of the king riding on a horse and said- 'O king! For the past many months, a wretched demon has been tormenting me and causing severe disturbances in my daily rituals. He is capable of taking any guise at will. Disguising as an elephant, lion, tiger, wolf and many other wild animals, he terrorises me. It has become very difficult for me to do my meditation. One day in my frustration, I let out a deep sigh. As soon as I did so, this divine horse descended from the sky. I heard a heavenly voice, which said- 'O Brahmin! This horse is capable of circumambulating the entire earth without getting tired. It can climb lofty mountains effortlessly and can also run in all the three worlds with the same speed. Hence, this horse shall be renowned as Kuvalaya. Riding it, the son of King Shatrujit will kill the demon that torments you day and night. 'O king! That is the reason that I have arrived in your court with this horse. Kindly accept it and instruct your son to ride it and kill the demon.' King Shatrujit saw his son Ritudhwaj off with the Brahmin riding that divine horse.

Kuvalaya goes to Patal Loka, killing of demon Patal Ketu and marriage with Madalasa Prince Ritudhwaj stayed in the hermitage of sage Galav and helped him to perform his Yagyas without any problem by clearing all the minor obstacles. The demons were not aware of his arrival in the

hermitage. One day, a demon arrived in the hermitage disguised as a wild boar and began to rub his bushy head against the body of sage Galav. Seeing this, his disciples began to scream. Prince Ritudhwaj at once rode the horse and wielding a weapon dashed after the boar. The prince injured the boar with an arrow, which was sickle-shaped. The demons fled from the scene. Prince Ritudhwaj followed the boar everywhere it went on the mountains, in the forests and on the riverbank. He was determined to slay the demon that had been disturbing the sage for long. Ultimately, the boar jumped into a pit. Ritudhwaj also followed it but could not see the boar anywhere in the pit. Instead he saw a beautiful town which could have matched even the abode of Indra. He entered the town where he saw an extremely pretty girl who was walking briskly. Ritudhwaj tried to know about her destination but she ignored him and climbed the stairs of a palace. Ritudhwaj also followed her and in the palace, he saw a beautiful girl sitting on a bedstead. As soon as the girl saw him, she fainted. Her beauty attracted even Ritudhwaj. He assured her that there was nothing to be afraid about. Then the same girl whom Ritudhwaj had sighted earlier came there and began to fan the fainted lady. The prince enquired about the reason of her unconsciousness.

KUVALAYASHVA AND THE HORSE KUVALAYA

Sumati says- O father! Now listen to the tale of a Brahmin named Alarka. Long ago, there lived a king named Shatrujit who had a meritorious son, Ritudhwaj. Prince Ritudhwaj had many friends with whom he used to play with. In course of time, two sons of Ashwatar, the king of Nagas became his friends in the guise of Brahmin boys. Both of them were young and good-looking. Both of them used to pass the entire day in the company of Ritudhwaj. They would return to their abode in Patal loka only at night. On being enquired by their father, they revealed the reason about their late arrival at home. They said- 'O father! Up there on the land, there is a prince named Ritudhwaj. He is the son of King Shatrujit. He is very handsome, gentle, brave, truthful, knowledgeous and meritorious. We enjoy his company.' Ashwatar said- 'Prince Ritudhwaj is really blessed for even the meritorious people like you praise him. But have you done anything to make him happy?' His sons asked- 'What can we do for his pleasure? We find ourselves incapable of pleasing such a person whose riches are even rare for Patal loka.' Ashwatar said- 'Even then, I wish to hear about the characteristics of your new friend.'

The sons said- O father! Once the prince narrated us a tale, we are going to relate it now. A Brahmin named Galav lived in King Shatrujits kingdom. One day, he arrived in the court of the king riding on a horse and said- 'O king! For the past many months, a wretched demon has been tormenting me and causing severe disturbances in my daily rituals. He is capable of taking any guise at will. Disguising as an elephant, lion, tiger, wolf and many other wild animals, he terrorises me. It has become very difficult for me to do my meditation. One day in my frustration, I let out a deep sigh. As soon as I did so, this divine horse descended from the sky. I heard a heavenly voice, which said- 'O Brahmin! This horse is capable of circumambulating the entire earth without getting tired. It can climb lofty mountains effortlessly and can also run in all the three worlds with the same speed. Hence, this horse shall be renowned as Kuvalaya. Riding it, the son of King Shatrujit will kill the demon that torments you day and night. 'O king! That is the reason that I have arrived in your court with this horse. Kindly accept it and instruct your son to ride it and kill the demon.' King Shatrujit saw his son Ritudhwaj off with the Brahmin riding that divine horse.

Kuvalaya goes to Patal Loka, killing of demon Patal Ketu and marriage with Madalasa Prince Ritudhwaj stayed in the hermitage of sage Galav and helped him to perform his Yagyas without any problem by clearing all the minor obstacles. The demons were not aware of his arrival in the hermitage. One day, a demon arrived in the hermitage disguised as a wild boar and began to rub his bushy head against the body of sage Galav. Seeing this, his disciples began to scream. Prince Ritudhwaj at once rode the horse and wielding a weapon dashed after the boar. The prince injured the boar with an arrow, which was sickle-shaped. The demons fled from the scene. Prince Ritudhwaj followed the boar everywhere it went on the mountains, in the forests and on the riverbank. He was determined to slay the demon that had been disturbing the sage for long. Ultimately, the boar jumped into a pit. Ritudhwaj also followed it but could not see the boar anywhere in the pit. Instead he saw a beautiful town which could have matched even the abode of Indra. He entered the town where he saw an extremely pretty girl who was walking briskly. Ritudhwaj tried to know about her destination but she ignored him and climbed the stairs of a palace. Ritudhwaj also followed her and in the palace, he saw a beautiful girl sitting on a bedstead. As soon as the girl saw him, she fainted. Her beauty attracted even Ritudhwaj. He assured her that there was nothing to be afraid about. Then the same girl whom Ritudhwaj had sighted earlier came there and began to fan the fainted lady. The prince enquired about the reason of her unconsciousness.

But the girl did not say anything. Instead she whispered something in the ears of her friend who then said- 'O stranger! This is the daughter of Vishwavasu, the king of Gandharvas. Her name is Madalasa. One day, while she was playing in her garden, a demon Patalketu abducted her.

Since then she stays here in his captivity. On the coming thirteenth day of this month that demon will marry her. But he doesn't deserve to be her husband. Yesterday, she was ready to commit suicide but the cow Surabhi, assured her that a man from the earth would come and kill the demon. Only he would be suitable for my friend. I am her friend. My name is Kundala. I am the daughter of Vindhyavan and wife of Pushkarmali. My husband had been killed by the demon Shumbh. Since then I have been touring various places of pilgrimage in order to receive salvation. That wretched Patalketu had taken the guise of a boar but a brave man has injured him with his arrow. I have arrived here only to investigate who is that man. Do not worry about my friend's unconsciousness. She has fainted because of your infatuating handsomeness. She has begun to love you but her problem is that only that man can marry her who has injured the boar. This thought has caused her to lose her consciousness. Now reveal your identity.'

Ritudhwaj said- 'I am the son of King Shatrujit. I have been staying in the hermitage of sage Galav to protect the sages. Just a few days back, a boar arrived in the hermitage and began to torment the sages. I have injured that boar with my arrow. Now I have arrived here following that boar and happened to see you.'

Hearing the words of Ritudhwaj, Madalasa felt shy as well as extreme joy. Kundala then said to her friend- 'The prince speaks the truth. Words of Surabhi cannot go wrong.' She then said to Ritudhwaj- 'O brave man! Doubtlessly you have killed the demon, Patalketu. My friend Madalasa is blessed now. Now its your duty to marry my friend and take her home as your bride.' Ritudhwaj said- 'How can I marry your friend without the permission of my father. I am still not fully independent.' Kundala said- 'Please do not say this. My friend is a divine beauty. Marry her right now.' Prince Ritudhwaj then agreed to marry Madalasa then and there. Madalasa happily remembered their family priest Tumbaru who arrived there instantaneously. In the presence of sacred fire, Tumbaru carried out the rituals of marriage and tied them in nuptial knot. Thereafter blessing the newly wed couple, Tumbaru and Kundala took to their respective paths.

On the other hand, when Ritudhwaj and Madalasa started off riding the horse, Kuvalaya, demons' army surrounded them. A fierce battle

followed. In no time, prince Ritudhwaj slayed the entire army and reached his kingdom. There he narrated the whole incident to his father Shatrujit. King Shatrujit felt very much pleased by the prowess of his son and blessed them heartily. Thereafter, Ritudhwaj came to his palace with his wife Madalasa. They then began to live happily.

But the girl did not say anything. Instead she whispered something in the ears of her friend who then said- 'O stranger! This is the daughter of Vishwavasu, the king of Gandharvas. Her name is Madalasa. One day, while she was playing in her garden, a demon Patalketu abducted her. Since then she stays here in his captivity. On the coming thirteenth day of this month that demon will marry her. But he doesn't deserve to be her husband. Yesterday, she was ready to commit suicide but the cow Surabhi, assured her that a man from the earth would come and kill the demon. Only he would be suitable for my friend. I am her friend. My name is Kundala. I am the daughter of Vindhyavan and wife of Pushkarmali. My husband had been killed by the demon Shumbh. Since then I have been touring various places of pilgrimage in order to receive salvation. That wretched Patalketu had taken the guise of a boar but a brave man has injured him with his arrow. I have arrived here only to investigate who is that man. Do not worry about my friend's unconsciousness. She has fainted because of your infatuating handsomeness. She has begun to love you but her problem is that only that man can marry her who has injured the boar. This thought has caused her to lose her consciousness. Now reveal your identity.'

Ritudhwaj said- 'I am the son of King Shatrujit. I have been staying in the hermitage of sage Galav to protect the sages. Just a few days back, a boar arrived in the hermitage and began to torment the sages. I have injured that boar with my arrow. Now I have arrived here following that boar and happened to see you.'

Hearing the words of Ritudhwaj, Madalasa felt shy as well as extreme joy. Kundala then said to her friend- 'The prince speaks the truth. Words of Surabhi cannot go wrong.' She then said to Ritudhwaj- 'O brave man! Doubtlessly you have killed the demon, Patalketu. My friend Madalasa is blessed now. Now its your duty to marry my friend and take her home as your bride.' Ritudhwaj said- 'How can I marry your friend without the permission of my father. I am still not fully independent.' Kundala said- 'Please do not say this. My friend is a divine beauty. Marry her right now.' Prince Ritudhwaj then agreed to marry Madalasa then and there. Madalasa happily remembered their family priest Tumbaru who arrived there instantaneously. In the presence of sacred fire, Tumbaru carried out the rituals of marriage and tied them in nuptial knot. Thereafter blessing the newly wed couple, Tumbaru and Kundala took to their respective paths.

On the other hand, when Ritudhwaj and Madalasa started off riding the horse, Kuvalaya, demons' army surrounded them. A fierce battle followed. In no time, prince Ritudhwaj slayed the entire army and reached his kingdom. There he narrated the whole incident to his father Shatrujit. King Shatrujit felt very much pleased by the prowess of his son and blessed them heartily. Thereafter, Ritudhwaj came to his palace with his wife Madalasa. They then began to live happily.

SEPARATION OF MADALASA

The newly-wed couple had hardly spent few months together when King Shatrujit once again instructed Ritudhwaj to travel across the entire earth

and see whether the Brahmins were performing their religious duties without any obstacles. Ritudhwaj obeyed the dictates of his father. He used to scale vast distances for the whole day and returned to his wife only at night. One day he noticed that a sage was staying at the bank of river Yamuna. He was in fact Talketu, the younger brother of Patalketu. But the prince could not recognise him. That sage approached Ritudhwaj and requested him to extend his protection over his hermitage, as he was about to start Yagyas. He also begged for the precious necklace of the prince on the pretext that he had nothing to pay as Dakshaina. The gullible prince gave his necklace to the sage. Then instructing the prince to guard the hermitage and promising to return soon, the sage left.

In fact, the sage who was actually a demon arrived in the court of King Shatrujit. Madalasa was also present in the court. He said- 'Prince Ritudhwaj sacrificed his life fighting with the demon while protecting my hermitage. Before his death, he gave me his necklace. His horse has been captured by the demon. I have brought this necklace to you to inform you about that sad incident.' After giving the necklace to Madalasa, the demon returned to the hermitage.

Hearing the news of her husband's death, Madalasa also gave up her life. Mourning soon enveloped the entire palace. Seeing the death of his daughter-in-law, Madalasa, King Shatrujit was in a dilemma as for whose death should he mourn. A little contemplation led him to the conclusion that it would be futile to mourn his son- Ritudhwaj's death because he had died for a noble cause. But his daughter-in-law had followed the steps of her husband, so her death should be mourned for. The queen also supported the king. Thereafter the king performed the last rites of both of them.

When Talketu returned to his hermitage, he found Ritudhwaj still standing alert. In a sweet tone, Talketu said- 'I am obliged by you, O prince! Staying here with unwavering mind, you have executed my desired task. I have met my objective, so you may go now.' Prince Ritudhwaj then returned to his palace riding his horse.

SEPARATION OF MADALASA

The newly-wed couple had hardly spent few months together when King Shatrujit once again instructed Ritudhwaj to travel across the entire earth and see whether the Brahmins were performing their religious duties without any obstacles. Ritudhwaj obeyed the dictates of his father. He used to scale vast distances for the whole day and returned to his wife only at night. One day he noticed that a sage was staying at the bank of river Yamuna. He was in fact Talketu, the younger brother of Patalketu. But the prince could not recognise him. That sage approached Ritudhwaj and requested him to extend his protection over his hermitage, as he was about to start Yagyas. He also begged for the precious necklace of the prince on the pretext that he had nothing to pay as Dakshaina. The gullible prince gave his necklace to the sage. Then instructing the prince to guard the hermitage and promising to return soon, the sage left.

In fact, the sage who was actually a demon arrived in the court of King Shatrujit. Madalasa was also present in the court. He said- 'Prince Ritudhwaj sacrificed his life fighting with the demon while protecting my hermitage. Before his death, he gave me his necklace. His horse has been captured by the demon. I have brought this necklace to you to inform you about that sad incident.' After giving the necklace to Madalasa, the demon returned to the hermitage.

Hearing the news of her husband's death, Madalasa also gave up her life. Mourning soon enveloped the entire palace. Seeing the death of his daughter-in-law, Madalasa, King Shatrujit was in a dilemma as for whose death should he mourn. A little contemplation led him to the conclusion that it would be futile to mourn his son- Ritudhwaj's death because he had died for a noble cause. But his daughter-in-law had followed the steps of her husband, so her death should be mourned for. The queen also supported the king. Thereafter the king performed the last rites of both of them.

When Talketu returned to his hermitage, he found Ritudhwaj still standing alert. In a sweet tone, Talketu said- 'I am obliged by you, O prince! Staying here with unwavering mind, you have executed my desired task. I have met my objective, so you may go now.' Prince Ritudhwaj then returned to his palace riding his horse.

MADALASA IS REBORN

When prince Ritudhwaj reached the capital, everyone expressed his pleasure with surprise. Ritudhwaj met everyone happily and went to the

palace of his parents. Though the king and the queen blessed him but sad expression on their face surprised the prince. Upon enquiry, the king related the entire incident and also how his wife Madalasa had died. The news of Madalsa's death shocked Ritudhwaj. Then consoled by his parents and friends, prince Ritudhwaj carried out the necessary consecrations to pacify the soul of his dead wife. He had decided never to marry again.

The sons of the Nag said- 'O father! Now prince Ritudhwaj lives like an ascetic. He never casts his eyes on women and only indulges in playing with people of his age. Hence all we can do for him is to keep him happy.'

Hearing the entire tale, Nagraj fell in deep thought. After sometime he said to his sons with a laughter- 'O sons! Now I will do such a thing that will bring back the smile of Ritudhwaj.' Saying this, Nagraj Ashwatar reached Plakshavataran, a place of pilgrimage at the foothills of Himalayas along with his brother Kambal. There they began to do severe penance to please Goddess Saraswati. At last, Saraswati appeared before them and asked them to seek a boon. Ashwatar requested her to bless both of them with a sweet and melodious voice. After granting them this boon, Goddess Saraswati disappeared. By her blessings, Ashwatar and his brother, Kambal became famous singers. Then they began worshipping Lord Shiva singing sweet and melodious hymns. Pleased by their prayers, Lord Shankar also asked them to seek a boon. At that Ashwatar said- 'O lord! I wish that Ritudhwaj's wife Madalasa takes birth as my daughter.' Lord Shankar said- 'With my blessings, your wish shall come true. During the Shradha period, you yourself take the middle portion of the Pind (food offered to dead ancestors) and contemplating on me, offer oblations to your ancestors. Madalasa will emerge from your 'middle-hood'.

Bowing before Lord Shiva thereafter, both the brothers returned to their kingdom in Patal loka. Ashwatar organised a Shradha in the same way as told by the Lord and consumed the middle portion of the food offered to the ancestors. Then contemplating on the desired object, he let out a deep sigh. Instantaneously, Madalasa emerged from his 'middle-hood'. Ashwatar did not reveal this fact to anybody and made adequate arrangements so that she could live in secrecy.

Thereafter one day, he instructed his sons to bring their friend Ritudhwaj

to the palace. Both the sons once again joined the company of Ritudhwaj. One day while playing, they insisted him to visit their palace. The prince gladly accompanied them. In Patal loka, he was amazed to see his Brahmin friends getting transformed into serpents. They took Ritudhwaj through the streets and lanes of their kingdom. Ultimately they reached the palace of Ashwatar. Introducing Ritudhwaj, the serpent princes said- 'O father! This is our brave friend, Ritudhwaj.' Ritudhwaj greeted Ashwatar respectfully and received his blessings. Ashwatar said to him- 'Long live O prince! My sons always sing praise of your divine virtues. I request you to stay with us for a few months and enjoy the pleasures of Patal loka.'

MADALASA IS REBORN

When prince Ritudhwaj reached the capital, everyone expressed his pleasure with surprise. Ritudhwaj met everyone happily and went to the palace of his parents. Though the king and the queen blessed him but sad expression on their face surprised the prince. Upon enquiry, the king related the entire incident and also how his wife Madalasa had died. The news of Madalsa's death shocked Ritudhwaj. Then consoled by his parents and friends, prince Ritudhwaj carried out the necessary consecrations to pacify the soul of his dead wife. He had decided never to marry again.

'The sons of the Nag said- 'O father! Now prince Ritudhwaj lives like an ascetic. He never casts his eyes on women and only indulges in playing with people of his age. Hence all we can do for him is to keep him happy.'

Hearing the entire tale, Nagraj fell in deep thought. After sometime he said to his sons with a laughter- 'O sons! Now I will do such a thing that will bring back the smile of Ritudhwaj.' Saying this, Nagraj Ashwatar reached Plakshavataran, a place of pilgrimage at the foothills of Himalayas along with his brother Kambal. There they began to do severe penance to please Goddess Saraswati. At last, Saraswati appeared before them and asked them to seek a boon. Ashwatar requested her to bless both of them with a sweet and melodious voice. After granting them this boon, Goddess Saraswati disappeared. By her blessings, Ashwatar and his brother, Kambal became famous singers. Then they began worshipping Lord Shiva singing sweet and melodious hymns. Pleased by their prayers, Lord Shankar also asked them to seek a boon. At that Ashwatar said- 'O lord! I wish that Ritudhwaj's wife Madalasa takes birth as my daughter.' Lord Shankar said- 'With my blessings, your wish shall come true. During the Shradha period, you yourself take the middle portion of the Pind (food offered to dead ancestors) and contemplating on me, offer oblations to your ancestors. Madalasa will emerge from your 'middle-hood'.

Bowing before Lord Shiva thereafter, both the brothers returned to their kingdom in Patal loka. Ashwatar organised a Shradha in the same way as told by the Lord and consumed the middle portion of the food offered to the ancestors. Then contemplating on the desired object, he let out a deep sigh. Instantaneously, Madalasa emerged from his 'middle-hood'. Ashwatar did not reveal this fact to anybody and made adequate arrangements so that she could live in secrecy.

Thereafter one day, he instructed his sons to bring their friend Ritudhwaj to the palace. Both the sons once again joined the company of Ritudhwaj. One day while playing, they insisted him to visit their palace. The prince gladly accompanied them. In Patal loka, he was amazed to see his Brahmin friends getting transformed into serpents. They took Ritudhwaj through the streets and lanes of their kingdom. Ultimately they reached the palace of Ashwatar. Introducing Ritudhwaj, the serpent princes said- 'O father! This is our brave friend, Ritudhwaj.' Ritudhwaj greeted Ashwatar respectfully and received his blessings. Ashwatar said to him- 'Long live O prince! My sons always sing praise of your divine virtues. I request you to stay with us for a few months and enjoy the pleasures of Patal loka.'

RITUDHWAJ RE-UNITES WITH MADALASA

Ritudhwaj stayed in the palace of Ashwatar. Nagraj did his best to keep Ritudhwaj happy and forget the sorrow of his wife's separation. During

his stay, Ashwatar tried many times to coax Ritudhwaj into revealing his heartiest desire. But every time Ritudhwaj intelligently avoided the topic. Once, King Ashwatar, in Ritudhwaj's presence, asked his sons what should be done to please him. They informed the king that nothing less than Madalasa would please the prince most and that the prince was eager to see his deceased wife once more.

Prince Ritudhwaj also said shyly that he would be greatly obliged if Nagraj could help him to have a sight of his deceased wife. Ashwatar said- 'O son! If you wish to see the illusion, come on, have a sight of your deceased wife.' Saying this, Nagraj called Madalasa who was staying secretly in his palace and asked Ritudhwaj- 'Take a good look, O son, if she is your wife.' Seeing his wife before him, the prince fainted. When he regained his consciousness, he stepped forward to touch her but Ashwatar stopped him cautioning that she was not real but illusionary and would vanish as soon as he touched her.

Hearing this, Ritudhwaj once again lost his consciousness. When he regained his consciousness, he uttered nothing but 'She's mine! She's mine!' Seeing the pitiable condition of the prince, Nagraj revealed the whole story of Madalsa's resurrection. Ritudhwaj became extremely joyous after re-uniting with his wife. Then he contemplated on his divine horse as a result of which, it appeared within a moment. Riding the horse, prince Ritudhwaj returned to his kingdom with his wife Madalasa.

RITUDHWAJ RE-UNITES WITH MADALASA

Ritudhwaj stayed in the palace of Ashwatar. Nagraj did his best to keep Ritudhwaj happy and forget the sorrow of his wife's separation. During his stay, Ashwatar tried many times to coax Ritudhwaj into revealing his heartiest desire. But every time Ritudhwaj intelligently avoided the topic. Once, King Ashwatar, in Ritudhwaj's presence, asked his sons what should be done to please him. They informed the king that nothing less than Madalasa would please the prince most and that the prince was eager to see his deceased wife once more.

Prince Ritudhwaj also said shyly that he would be greatly obliged if Nagraj could help him to have a sight of his deceased wife. Ashwatar said- 'O son! If you wish to see the illusion, come on, have a sight of your deceased wife.' Saying this, Nagraj called Madalasa who was staying secretly in his palace and asked Ritudhwaj- 'Take a good look, O son, if she is your wife.' Seeing his wife before him, the prince fainted. When he regained his consciousness, he stepped forward to touch her but Ashwatar stopped him cautioning that she was not real but illusionary and would vanish as soon as he touched her.

Hearing this, Ritudhwaj once again lost his consciousness. When he regained his consciousness, he uttered nothing but 'She's mine! She's mine!' Seeing the pitiable condition of the prince, Nagraj revealed the whole story of Madalsa's resurrection. Ritudhwaj became extremely joyous after re-uniting with his wife. Then he contemplated on his divine horse as a result of which, it appeared within a moment. Riding the horse, prince Ritudhwaj returned to his kingdom with his wife Madalasa.

BIRTH OF MADALASA'S SONS

After returning to his father's kingdom, Ritudhwaj narrated the whole incident to his parents of how he regained Madalasa. Then they began to

live happily. After many years, King Shatrujit crowned Ritudhwaj as the king. After King Ritudhwaj's accession to the throne, Madalasa gave birth to her first son. Ritudhwaj named the child as Vikrant. After sometime, Madalasa gave birth to her second son whom Ritudhwaj named as Subahu. Subsequently, their third son was born and named Shatrumardan. After the naming ceremony of the third son, Madalasa could not help laughing, as she was very amused by such a name given to her son. The metaphysical knowledge, which Madalasa gave to her three sons, had helped them to become ascetics. When their fourth son was born, the king sought her approval on the name being given to him. This made the queen laugh. The king asked her to name the child. Madalasa named this child as Alarka.

Hearing the name, the king ridiculed its relevance. Madalasa said that the names have significance only for worldly matters. She also reminded the king about the futility of the names given to their previous children. As Madalasa began to preach her fourth son about the metaphysics, the king stopped her by saying that she had already preached all the three sons on the path of renunciation. He requested her to spare the fourth child so that he could grow up and become the king one-day. Madalasa then blessed her son- 'You are blessed my son because you will rule the earth without obstacles. Now cultivate in your heart the desire to do well to others. Never caste your eyes on women other than your wife. Always contemplate on Murari to destroy the evil thoughts in your heart.'

BIRTH OF MADALASA'S SONS

After returning to his father's kingdom, Ritudhwaj narrated the whole incident to his parents of how he regained Madalasa. Then they began to live happily. After many years, King Shatrujit crowned Ritudhwaj as the king. After King Ritudhwaj's accession to the throne, Madalasa gave birth to her first son. Ritudhwaj named the child as Vikrant. After sometime, Madalasa gave birth to her second son whom Ritudhwaj named as Subahu. Subsequently, their third son was born and named Shatrumardan. After the naming ceremony of the third son, Madalasa could not help laughing, as she was very amused by such a name given to her son. The metaphysical knowledge, which Madalasa gave to her three sons, had helped them to become ascetics. When their fourth son was born, the king sought her approval on the name being given to him. This made the queen laugh. The king asked her to name the child. Madalasa named this child as Alarka.

Hearing the name, the king ridiculed its relevance. Madalasa said that the names have significance only for worldly matters. She also reminded the king about the futility of the names given to their previous children. As Madalasa began to preach her fourth son about the metaphysics, the king stopped her by saying that she had already preached all the three sons on the path of renunciation. He requested her to spare the fourth child so that he could grow up and become the king one-day. Madalasa then blessed her son- 'You are blessed my son because you will rule the earth without obstacles. Now cultivate in your heart the desire to do well to others. Never caste your eyes on women other than your wife. Always contemplate on Murari to destroy the evil thoughts in your heart.'

PREACHINGS OF MADALASA

Madalasa used to preach the little prince while played. When Alarka attained boyhood, he asked-'O mother! What should I do in order to

mastery over physical and metaphysical matters? How can I serve my subjects in the best possible way?'

Madalasa said- 'Looking after the welfare of the subjects religiously is the supreme duty of a king. He should always be alert against the activities of his enemies. With the help of spies, the king should keep a watch on the activities of his minister so that he could not make friends with the enemies. It is unwise for the king to trust everybody but under certain circumstances, he may trust even his enemies. A king must control his lust but at the same time, he should make efforts to increase the boundaries of his kingdom. Surrendering to sensual comfort is like death for a king. A king should appear as all pervasive and omnipresent. Fostering the subjects with total righteousness enhances the wisdom of the king.'

PREACHINGS OF MADALASA

Madalasa used to preach the little prince while played. When Alarka attained boyhood, he asked- 'O mother! What should I do in order to mastery over physical and metaphysical matters? How can I serve my subjects in the best possible way?'

Madalasa said- 'Looking after the welfare of the subjects religiously is the supreme duty of a king. He should always be alert against the activities of his enemies. With the help of spies, the king should keep a watch on the activities of his minister so that he could not make friends with the enemies. It is unwise for the king to trust everybody but under certain circumstances, he may trust even his enemies. A king must control his lust but at the same time, he should make efforts to increase the boundaries of his kingdom. Surrendering to sensual comfort is like death for a king. A king should appear as all pervasive and omnipresent. Fostering the subjects with total righteousness enhances the wisdom of the king.'

DUTIES OF PEOPLE BELONGING TO VARIOUS ASHRAMAS

VARNA ASHRAMA DHARMA

Alarka says- Tell me about the duties of the different classes and stages of life.'

Madalasa says- 'Donation, study and Yagya, these three are the religion of a Brahmin. Performing Yagya for others, teaching and accepting donation are the three vocations of Brahmin. Donation, study and Yagya are also the religious duties of Kshatriyas. Protection of land and using weapons are vocation for Kshatriyas. Religious duties of a Vaishya are also same like that of the Brahmins such as donation, study and Yagya. For a living, Vaishya may take up animal rearing, agriculture and trade as profession. Serving all these three above mentioned castes as well as making donations and performing Yagya are the religious duties of a Shudra. Tilling the earth, serving Brahmins, feeding animals, selling and purchasing items are professions of a Shudra. A person belonging to Dwij class may relatively enjoy freedom until his sacred thread ceremony has not been performed. After the sacred thread ceremony, he should come to stay at the home of his teacher and observe celibacy strictly while studying scriptures. There he is expected to serve the Guru sincerely. At the completion of education, he should pay Dakshaina to his Guru. He may get married and start the second stage of his life that is Grihastha ashrama. He should then subsequently opt for Vanprastha and Sanyas respectively.

After the completion of education and paying all the dues, the disciple is ready to start second stage of his life that is Grihastha ashrama. For this he should first find a suitable girl from his caste and get married. Grihastha ashrama is considered as the best stage of life. It is in itself a complete Yagya. As a householder, he is expected to foster those who are dependent on him. During this stage of his life, he should earn his livelihood by occupations ascribed for his caste. He should please the deities by performing Yagyas, his ancestors by making oblations, Prajapatis by producing children, spectres by offering sacrifices of cereals and society by showering love. Even the ascetic and celibates depend on married people for their daily bread. Hence married life or Grihastha ashrama is stated to be superior among all the ashramas.

A Grihastha must welcome and treat even his unexpected guests with great warmth. A householder who fails to satisfy his guest never succeeds in religious matters. The Yagyas that are offered in such households go

futile. Hence it is not proper for the householder to show ego and abuse a guest otherwise he will have to expiate for it later.

When the children of the householder grow up and his body becomes senile, he should go to the forest after relinquishing the world. There, he should pass his time by indulging himself in austerities and religious activities. This stage is known as Vanprastha ashrama and is most necessary for the sanctification of his soul. This stage is followed by Sanyas ashrama- the stage, which requires complete renunciation, celibacy, control of senses and anger etc. The virtues like truthfulness, sanctity, non-violence, tolerance, forgiveness, kindness, generosity and contentment are the religious merits applicable to all the ashramas equally. Those who abide by their religion stay in the abode of Brahma till the reign of fourteen Indras. The king punishes those who violate this religious code. If the king doesn't punish them, he is himself destroyed. Hence a king must first of all abide by the duties as prescribed for different ashramas in his life and only then he has the right to punish those people who violate these dictates.'

DUTIES OF PEOPLE BELONGING TO VARIOUS ASHRAMAS

VARNA ASHRAMA DHARMA

Alarka says- 'Tell me about the duties of the different classes and stages of life.'

Madalasa says- 'Donation, study and Yagya, these three are the religion of a Brahmin. Performing Yagya for others, teaching and accepting donation are the three vocations of Brahmin. Donation, study and Yagya are also the religious duties of Kshatriyas. Protection of land and using weapons are vocation for Kshatriyas. Religious duties of a Vaishya are also same like that of the Brahmins such as donation, study and Yagya. For a living, Vaishya may take up animal rearing, agriculture and trade as profession. Serving all these three above mentioned castes as well as making donations and performing Yagya are the religious duties of a Shudra. Tilling the earth, serving Brahmins, feeding animals, selling and purchasing items are professions of a Shudra. A person belonging to Dwij class may relatively enjoy freedom until his sacred thread ceremony has not been performed. After the sacred thread ceremony, he should come to stay at the home of his teacher and observe celibacy strictly while studying scriptures. There he is expected to serve the Guru sincerely. At the completion of education, he should pay Dakshaina to his Guru. He may get married and start the second stage of his life that is Grihastha ashrama. He should then subsequently opt for Vanprastha and Sanyas respectively.

After the completion of education and paying all the dues, the disciple is ready to start second stage of his life that is Grihastha ashrama. For this he should first find a suitable girl from his caste and get married. Grihastha ashrama is considered as the best stage of life. It is in itself a complete Yagya. As a householder, he is expected to foster those who are dependent on him. During this stage of his life, he should earn his livelihood by occupations ascribed for his caste. He should please the deities by performing Yagyas, his ancestors by making oblations, Prajapatis by producing children, spectres by offering sacrifices of cereals and society by showering love. Even the ascetic and celibates depend on married people for their daily bread. Hence married life or Grihastha ashrama is stated to be superior among all the ashramas.

A Grihastha must welcome and treat even his unexpected guests with great warmth. A householder who fails to satisfy his guest never succeeds in religious matters. The Yagyas that are offered in such households go futile. Hence it is not proper for the householder to show ego and abuse a guest otherwise he will have to expiate for it later.

When the children of the householder grow up and his body becomes senile, he should go to the forest after relinquishing the world. There, he should pass his time by indulging himself in austerities and religious activities. This stage is known as Vanprastha ashrama and is most necessary for the sanctification of his soul. This stage is followed by Sanyas ashrama- the stage, which requires complete renunciation, celibacy, control of senses and anger etc. The virtues like truthfulness, sanctity, non-violence, tolerance, forgiveness, kindness, generosity and contentment are the religious merits applicable to all the ashramas equally. Those who abide by their religion stay in the abode of Brahma till the reign of fourteen Indras. The king punishes those who violate this religious code. If the king doesn't punish them, he is himself destroyed. Hence a king must first of all abide by the duties as prescribed for different ashramas in his life and only then he has the right to punish those people who violate these dictates. '

DUTIES OF A GRIHASTHA (HOUSEHOLDER)

Alarka says- What are the duties of a married man by discharging which he becomes free from all kinds of bondage and attains salvation. Kindly

tell me about these things.

Madalasa says- O son! Those people who discharge their duties as a householder by fostering all the living beings attain to the heaven automatically. All the living creatures of the world including the deities and the dead ancestors are dependent on their nurturing on the householder. They always look at the face of the married man for their living. In fact, Grihastha ashrama can be compared to a cow that fosters others with her milk. All the four Vedas are present in this 'cow' that is Grihastha ashrama. Entire universe is reflected in this ashrama.

Daily after the bath in the morning, a Grihastha must perform oblations to the deities, to the sages, Prajapati and ancestors by offering water to them. Then he should perform a Yagya and offer cereals in the sacrificial fire. There are certain places in the house, which are reserved for specific deities and where offerings are made to them. Sacrifice to Brahma should be offered in the central part of the home, to Vishwadeva in the eastern side of the home, to Dhanvantari in the northern side, to Indra again in the eastern side, to Yama in the southern side, to Varuna in the western side and to Soma in the northern side of the home. At the threshold of the house, sacrifice should be offered to Dhata and Vidhata. One must sit facing the south while offering sacrifice to his dead ancestors. For the dogs and birds, sacrifices should be given on the ground in the morning and evening. At the arrival of a guest, a Grihastha must worship him by offering water, cereals, flowers etc. as per his financial condition. If possible, a Grihastha should feed one or more Brahmins in order to pacify his ancestors. He should give alms to a beggar and a celibate. Without giving alms, a Grihastha must not proceed to dine. He should also feed starving and diseased people first. Such kind of living definitely benefits a Grihastha.

DUTIES OF A GRIHASTHA (HOUSEHOLDER)

Alarka says- What are the duties of a married man by discharging which he becomes free from all kinds of bondage and attains salvation. Kindly tell me about these things.

Madalasa says- O son! Those people who discharge their duties as a householder by fostering all the living beings attain to the heaven automatically. All the living creatures of the world including the deities and the dead ancestors are dependent on their nurturing on the householder. They always look at the face of the married man for their living. In fact, Grihastha ashrama can be compared to a cow that fosters others with her milk. All the four Vedas are present in this 'cow' that is Grihastha ashrama. Entire universe is reflected in this ashrama.

Daily after the bath in the morning, a Grihastha must perform oblations to the deities, to the sages, Prajapati and ancestors by offering water to them. Then he should perform a Yagya and offer cereals in the sacrificial fire. There are certain places in the house, which are reserved for specific deities and where offerings are made to them. Sacrifice to Brahma should be offered in the central part of the home, to Vishwadeva in the eastern side of the home, to Dhanvantari in the northern side, to Indra again in the eastern side, to Yama in the southern side, to Varuna in the western side and to Soma in the northern side of the home. At the threshold of the house, sacrifice should be offered to Dhata and Vidhata. One must sit facing the south while offering sacrifice to his dead ancestors. For the dogs and birds, sacrifices should be given on the ground in the morning and evening. At the arrival of a guest, a Grihastha must worship him by offering water, cereals, flowers etc. as per his financial condition. If possible, a Grihastha should feed one or more Brahmins in order to pacify his ancestors. He should give alms to a beggar and a celibate. Without giving alms, a Grihastha must not proceed to dine. He should also feed starving and diseased people first. Such kind of living definitely benefits a Grihastha.

SHRADHA AND ITS RITUALS REGULAR AND CAUSAL

DUTIES

Madalasa says- O son! A Grihastha has three kinds of duties- regular, causal and a combination of both. Rituals, which are connected with oblations and carried out daily, are called regular duties. Rituals and consecrations performed at the birth of a child are called causal duties. Yearly performance of Shradha for the dead ancestors is a combination of regular and causal duties. Now listen about the causal duties.

At the time of a child's birth, different kinds of rituals and consecrations are carried out in the household. During the time of marriage ceremony also, many more rituals are carried out. At the time of marriage however, performance of the Shradha named Nandimukh is a must. During the Shradha, the host should sit facing the north or the east and offer a loaf made of barley flour and yoghurt. Then he should circumambulate around two Brahmins and worship them.

Rituals and Shradha carried out in the household after the occurrence of any death in the household comes under the category of causal duties. During the Shradha period, all kinds of sacred activities are forbidden. Only the use of Kusha grass is permitted. Donation of 'Pind' comprising of barley flour, yoghurt, honey etc. is made for only one time to pacify the soul of the dead person. Then oblation of water with sesame seeds should be offered in the name of the dead person. This ritual should continue for a year- once every month. After a year, Shradha is organised in which one, three or five Brahmins are fed. Thereafter, every year, during the darker phase of Ashwin month, a Shradha should be carried out for the dead ancestors. This ritual is a combination of regular and causal duties.

Sages have made provision for appeasement of dead ancestors up to the last seven generations. Cereals, which the people offer in the name of their dead ancestors, pacify those souls who stay in Pishach Yoni. Water falling on the earth at the time of wringing the clothes after one's bath pacifies those souls, who have taken the form of vegetation after their death. Water falling during the bath satisfies those souls who have attained the status of deities. Cereals that fall during the lifting of Pind satisfy those souls who are in lower life forms. The cereals that scatter here and there and swept aside satisfy souls of those people, who had died in their childhood before the accomplishment of any consecration. The waste water falling down while Brahmin washes his hands after dining and pacifies all the other souls.

Every month, during the waning phase of the Moon or on the day of Amavasya, Shradha should be carried out. Besides it, eighth day of darker phase in the month of Paush is also good for carrying out Shradha. If a virtuous Brahmin is available, time of solar and lunar eclipses is also good for Shradha. The time when the Sun crosses the equator during its northward and southward journey is also good for Shradha. Apart from these above mentioned situations, one can also organise Shradha in the following circumstances- at the time of great calamity, availability of items suitable for Shradha, after a nightmare, during the period of birth Nakshatra and during the period of unfavourable stars etc. On the first day of the Shradha, a virtuous Brahmin should be invited while the host must observe total restraint. It is said that such a man, who indulges in sexual intercourse on the same day after carrying out Shradha or eating food of Shradha, causes his dead ancestors to sleep in semen for one month. Ancestors of such a man, who performs Shradha immediately after having a sexual intercourse, drink urine and semen for one month. Hence a virtuous Brahmin, whom the host is intending to feed, should be informed about the Shradha one day earlier in advance. If a Brahmin is not available, a true celibate can be fed on the day of Shradha.

SHRADHA AND ITS RITUALS REGULAR AND CAUSAL

DUTIES

Madalasa says- O son! A Grihastha has three kinds of duties- regular, causal and a combination of both. Rituals, which are connected with oblations and carried out daily, are called regular duties. Rituals and consecrations performed at the birth of a child are called causal duties. Yearly performance of Shradha for the dead ancestors is a combination of regular and causal duties. Now listen about the causal duties.

At the time of a child's birth, different kinds of rituals and consecrations are carried out in the household. During the time of marriage ceremony also, many more rituals are carried out. At the time of marriage however, performance of the Shradha named Nandimukh is a must. During the Shradha, the host should sit facing the north or the east and offer a loaf made of barley flour and yoghurt. Then he should circumambulate around two Brahmins and worship them.

Rituals and Shradha carried out in the household after the occurrence of any death in the household comes under the category of causal duties. During the Shradha period, all kinds of sacred activities are forbidden. Only the use of Kusha grass is permitted. Donation of 'Pind' comprising of barley flour, yoghurt, honey etc. is made for only one time to pacify the soul of the dead person. Then oblation of water with sesame seeds should be offered in the name of the dead person. This ritual should continue for a year- once every month. After a year, Shradha is organised in which one, three or five Brahmins are fed. Thereafter, every year, during the darker phase of Ashwin month, a Shradha should be carried out for the dead ancestors. This ritual is a combination of regular and causal duties.

Sages have made provision for appeasement of dead ancestors up to the last seven generations. Cereals, which the people offer in the name of their dead ancestors, pacify those souls who stay in Pishach Yoni. Water falling on the earth at the time of wringing the clothes after one's bath pacifies those souls, who have taken the form of vegetation after their death. Water falling during the bath satisfies those souls who have attained the status of deities. Cereals that fall during the lifting of Pind satisfy those souls who are in lower life forms. The cereals that scatter here and there and swept aside satisfy souls of those people, who had died in their childhood before the accomplishment of any consecration. The waste water falling down while Brahmin washes his hands after dining and pacifies all the other souls.

Every month, during the waning phase of the Moon or on the day of Amavasya, Shradha should be carried out. Besides it, eighth day of darker phase in the month of Paush is also good for carrying out Shradha. If a virtuous Brahmin is available, time of solar and lunar eclipses is also good for Shradha. The time when the Sun crosses the equator during its northward and southward journey is also good for Shradha. Apart from these above mentioned situations, one can also organise Shradha in the following circumstances- at the time of great calamity, availability of items suitable for Shradha, after a nightmare, during the period of birth Nakshatra and during the period of unfavourable stars etc. On the first day of the Shradha, a virtuous Brahmin should be invited while the host must observe total restraint. It is said that such a man, who indulges in sexual intercourse on the same day after carrying out Shradha or eating food of Shradha, causes his dead ancestors to sleep in semen for one month. Ancestors of such a man, who performs Shradha immediately after having a sexual intercourse, drink urine and semen for one month. Hence a virtuous Brahmin, whom the host is intending to feed, should be informed about the Shradha one day earlier in advance. If a Brahmin is not available, a true celibate can be fed on the day of Shradha.

After the Brahmin has carried out all the necessary rituals, Havan, oblation etc., he must be formally insisted to dine. All kinds of edible items that a Brahmin may wish to eat should be offered. While reciting the Rakshodhn mantra, grains of sesame and mustard should be

scattered on the ground. After the Brahmin has dined, he should be offered with water to wash his hands and some cereals that should be scattered on the ground with his permission. Then sitting on the seat of Kusha grass, the host should offer a Pind made of sesame seeds, barley flour, sugar, ghee etc. An oblation of water should follow it. At the end, the Brahmin should be seen off with proper Dakshaina. Only then the host is free to dine himself along with other invited guests and family members.

After the Brahmin has carried out all the necessary rituals, Havan, oblation etc., he must be formally insisted to dine. All kinds of edible items that a Brahmin may wish to eat should be offered. While reciting the Rakshodhn mantra, grains of sesame and mustard should be scattered on the ground. After the Brahmin has dined, he should be offered with water to wash his hands and some cereals that should be scattered on the ground with his permission. Then sitting on the seat of Kusha grass, the host should offer a Pind made of sesame seeds, barley flour, sugar, ghee etc. An oblation of water should follow it. At the end, the Brahmin should be seen off with proper Dakshaina. Only then the host is free to dine himself along with other invited guests and family members.

DO'S AND DON'TS DURING A SHRADHA

Madalasa says- O son! I am now narrating about the do's and don'ts to be followed during Shradha. Many kinds of edible items can be offered in

the Shradha. These include cereals like barley, wheat, rice, millet, com, etc., fish, flesh of deer, rabbit, bird, wild boar, goat and Neelgai (antelope). All these kinds of items are capable of pacifying the soul of dead ancestors for different period of time depending on the nature of offerings being made. Likewise cereals offered in sacred fire cause satisfaction for one month. Fish causes satisfaction for two months. Flesh of deer causes satisfaction for three months. Flesh of rabbit causes satisfaction for four months. Flesh of bird causes satisfaction for five months. Flesh of wild boar causes satisfaction for six months. Flesh of goat causes satisfaction for seven months. Flesh of different types of deer and antelope causes satisfaction for eight, nine and ten months respectively.

Food items made of cow's milk and ghee and kheer cause satisfaction to the dead ancestors for one year. Different varieties of rice, barley, millet, wheat, sesame, moong dal, mustard etc. are extremely satisfying food for the ancestors. Different types of pulses and com can also be offered. Use of garlic, carrot, onion, radish, refined salt, red gum, gourd etc. is prohibited. Water that is stinking, frothy, stale or otherwise incapable of quenching a cow's thirst should also be discarded. Milk of doe, camel, goat, buffalo and other one-hoof animals, yak and such a cow that was milked for the past ten days is also forbidden for use in Shradha. Soil that is infested with insects, dry, baked with fire, stinking or collected from an unholy place should not be used. Similarly, such people who are violent, wretched, killers of Brahmins, impotent or have fiendish characters should not be involved in the Shradha. Cocks and pigs should also be kept away from the place of Shradha. This is the reason why sesame seeds are scattered at the site of Shradha secretly. The host must not see a woman in menses. It is also not necessary to feed a host of Brahmins. Instead it is sufficient to feed only one meritorious Brahmin with complete devotion and respect. It is enough to appease the dead ancestors. Appeasement of ancestors automatically lead to appeasement of the deities, planets, Nakshatras and all whose blessings can transform the living condition of the person.

DO'S AND DON'TS DURING A SHRADHA

Madalasa says- O son! I am now narrating about the do's and don'ts to be followed during Shradha. Many kinds of edible items can be offered in the Shradha. These include cereals like barley, wheat, rice, millet, corn, etc., fish, flesh of deer, rabbit, bird, wild boar, goat and Neelgai (antelope). All these kinds of items are capable of pacifying the soul of dead ancestors for different period of time depending on the nature of offerings being made. Likewise cereals offered in sacred fire cause satisfaction for one month. Fish causes satisfaction for two months. Flesh of deer causes satisfaction for three months. Flesh of rabbit causes satisfaction for four months. Flesh of bird causes satisfaction for five months. Flesh of wild boar causes satisfaction for six months. Flesh of goat causes satisfaction for seven months. Flesh of different types of deer and antelope causes satisfaction for eight, nine and ten months respectively.

Food items made of cow's milk and ghee and kheer cause satisfaction to the dead ancestors for one year. Different varieties of rice, barley, millet, wheat, sesame, moong dal, mustard etc. are extremely satisfying food for the ancestors. Different types of pulses and corn can also be offered. Use of garlic, carrot, onion, radish, refined salt, red gum, gourd etc. is prohibited. Water that is stinking, frothy, stale or otherwise incapable of quenching a cow's thirst should also be discarded. Milk of doe, camel, goat, buffalo and other one-hoof animals, yak and such a cow that was milked for the past ten days is also forbidden for use in Shradha. Soil that is infested with insects, dry, baked with fire, stinking or collected from an unholy place should not be used. Similarly, such people who are violent, wretched, killers of Brahmins, impotent or have fiendish characters should not be involved in the Shradha. Cocks and pigs should also be kept away from the place of Shradha. This is the reason why sesame seeds are scattered at the site of Shradha secretly. The host must not see a woman in menses. It is also not necessary to feed a host of Brahmins. Instead it is sufficient to feed only one meritorious Brahmin with complete devotion and respect. It is enough to appease the dead ancestors. Appeasement of ancestors automatically lead to appeasement of the deities, planets, Nakshatras and all whose blessings can transform the living condition of the person.

AUSPICIOUS DAYS AND MONTHS

Madalasa says- Shradha can be performed on any day during the dark lunar phase in the Hindu month of Ashwin i.e. from the first day to the

Amavasya. Performing of Shradha on any of these days brings the following benefits- Performing Shradha on the first day or Pratipada brings monetary gain. Shradha performed on the second day brings prosperity, Shradha performed on the third day blesses the performer with a boon. Performing Shradha on the fourth day leads to the destruction of enemies. Performing Shradha on the fifth day gives benefit from a woman; Shradha performed on the sixth day helps a man to acquire respect in the society. Shradha performed on the seventh day makes the performer an able leader; Shradha performed on the eighth day enhances the intelligence. Shradha performed on the ninth day brings the company of the attractive women. Shradha performed on the tenth day leads to the fulfilment of all the desires. Performing Shradha on the eleventh day helps him to attain the knowledge of Vedas. Shradha performed on the twelfth day makes the performer victorious. Shradha performed on the thirteenth day leads to long life and luxuries. Shradha performed on the fourteenth day and Amavasya lead to the fulfilment of all the desires.

Fruits of Shradha performed during different Nakshatras:

NAKSHATRA RESULT

NAKSHATRA RESULT

AUSPICIOUS DAYS AND MONTHS

Madalasa says- Shradha can be performed on any day during the dark lunar phase in the Hindu month of Ashwin i.e. from the first day to the Amavasya. Performing of Shradha on any of these days brings the following benefits- Performing Shradha on the first day or Pratipada brings monetary gain. Shradha performed on the second day brings prosperity, Shradha performed on the third day blesses the performer with a boon. Performing Shradha on the fourth day leads to the destruction of enemies. Performing Shradha on the fifth day gives benefit from a woman; Shradha performed on the sixth day helps a man to acquire respect in the society. Shradha performed on the seventh day makes the performer an able leader; Shradha performed on the eighth day enhances the intelligence. Shradha performed on the ninth day brings the company of the attractive women. Shradha performed on the tenth day leads to the fulfilment of all the desires. Performing Shradha on the eleventh day helps him to attain the knowledge of Vedas. Shradha performed on the twelfth day makes the performer victorious. Shradha performed on the thirteenth day leads to long life and luxuries. Shradha performed on the fourteenth day and Amavasya lead to the fulfilment of all the desires.

Fruits of Shradha performed during different Nakshatras:

NAKSHATRA	RESULT
NAKSHATRA	RESULT
KRITIKA	Heaven abode
ROHINI	Progeny
MRIGSHIRA	Radiance
ARDRA	Bravery
PUNARVASU	Land
PUSHYA	Health
ASHLESHA	Sons
MAGHA	Family help

PURVAPHALGUNI Fortune UTTARAPHALGUNI Virtues HASTA Greatness

CHITRA Beauty/ personality

SWATI Trade

VISHAKHA Progeny/desires

ANURADHA Respect

JYESHTHA Dominance

MOOLA Disease-free

PUR V AS ARH A Popularity

UTTARASARHA No sorrows

SHRAVANA Heaven abode

DHANISHTHA Wealth

ABHIJIT Vedas/medicine

SHATABHISHA Animal wealth

PURVABADRAPAD Knowledge/cattle UTTARABADRAPAD Precious metals REV ATI Horses

ASHWINI Increase in life

BHARANI

Prosperity

PURVAPHALGUNI	Fortune
UTTARAPHALGUNI	Virtues
HASTA	Greatness
CHITRA	Beauty/ personality
SWATI	Trade
VISHAKHA	Progeny/desires
ANURADHA	Respect
JYESHTHA	Dominance
MOOLA	Disease-free
PURVASARHA	Popularity
UTTARASARHA	No sorrows
SHRAVANA	Heaven abode
DHANISHTHA	Wealth
ABHIJIT	Vedas/medicine
SHATABHISHA	Animal wealth
PURVABADRAPAD	Knowledge/cattle
UTTARABADRAPAD	Precious metals
REVATI	Horses
ASHWINI	Increase in life
BHARANI	Prosperity

FORBIDDEN AND PERMITTED ITEMS

Madalasa says- O son! Now, I will tell you the do's and don'ts for healthy living. Stale cereals, oil and fats stored over a prolonged period of time,

items prepared from wheat and barley and food items which is not prepared from pure ghee or milk should not be consumed. Flesh of turtle, porcupine etc. is worth eating whereas flesh of village pigs and cocks should not be consumed. Brahmin can eat flesh offered to him in a Shradha. Things like conch, stone, gold, pearl etc. are purified simply by washing in water. Cereals either touched or washed by unwarranted people is not fit for any purpose. Flesh of animals killed by Chandala or killed for the purpose of oblation in Shradha is also considered pure. Seat, bed, vehicle, boat, grass, rays of the Sun and Moon and air are naturally pure things. Touch by a woman who is in her menses, dog, jackal, a mother who has recently given birth to a child, a Chandala, carriers of the brier etc. is defiling in nature. A person however can become pure once again by taking bath if touched by any of these people and animals. One should not neglect the appearance of blood and cough. Excretions and water collected after washing the feet should be thrown out of the home at once. Getting touched by the people who criticize deities, ancestors, Yagya, mantra etc. is also defiling. Sighting of the Sun however purifies the defiled person.

Duties of the woman: Different male and female deities dwell at the threshold of the home. Hence this portion of the home should be worshipped properly everyday. At dawn, the threshold should not be left vacant or it may have adverse effect on one's lineage. The whole area inside the home should be plastered with cow dung daily or washed with pure water. All these activities should be carried out by the better half of the householder. Those women, who prepare food during the last quarter of the night, suffer from infertility in future births. Those women, who do not sweep their home in the evening, remain unmarried and are bereft of wealth in future births. Such women also lose their wealth, lifespan and reputation. Kicking the following things like broom, hearth and mortar etc. or touching them with feet also leads to the loss of progeny and wealth.

The householder should not use broken seat, board and black blanket for sitting purpose. He should not comb his hair while facing south. Those who do not dine, perform Havan or make donations at the appropriate time are no better than eunuchs. Those who shun these activities despite having wealth are worse than mice. Those who do not respect the deities, teachers, wife of the teacher, cow. Brahmin etc. are boycotted by the

society. Naked are those who are devoid of Vedas, other religious scriptures and rituals. Such a house is really contemptible, which is boycotted by the Brahmins and where daily routines are not followed regularly.

After birth or death in the family, a Brahmin becomes purified in ten days. During this period of ten days, he should avoid all the religious activities. In similar conditions, a Kshatriya gets purified in twelve days after a birth or death in his family, a Vaishya in fifteen days and a Shudra in one month. Dead body of a person should be cremated outside the boundaries of the village. His family members should offer oblation of water to pacify his soul on the first, fourth, seventh and ninth days after the cremation. Ashes should be collected from the fourth day. In case of deaths caused by a snake bite or poisoning family members may get purified after a day. There is no impurity in case of the death of a child, an immigrant and the one who has renounced everything. Even their cremation is not carried out nor oblation of water is made.

If one more death occurs in the family while the mourning period of the earlier death is still continuing, impurity of the second death lasts as long as that of the first one. Similar rules are applied to the impurity caused by the birth. Thus abiding by these norms, the householder can easily attain the four objectives of life that is Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha.

FORBIDDEN AND PERMITTED ITEMS

Madalasa says- O son! Now, I will tell you the do's and don'ts for healthy living. Stale cereals, oil and fats stored over a prolonged period of time, items prepared from wheat and barley and food items which is not prepared from pure ghee or milk should not be consumed. Flesh of turtle, porcupine etc. is worth eating whereas flesh of village pigs and cocks should not be consumed. Brahmin can eat flesh offered to him in a Shradha. Things like conch, stone, gold, pearl etc. are purified simply by washing in water. Cereals either touched or washed by unwarranted people is not fit for any purpose. Flesh of animals killed by Chandala or killed for the purpose of oblation in Shradha is also considered pure. Seat, bed, vehicle, boat, grass, rays of the Sun and Moon and air are naturally pure things. Touch by a woman who is in her menses, dog, jackal, a mother who has recently given birth to a child, a Chandala, carriers of the brier etc. is defiling in nature. A person however can become pure once again by taking bath if touched by any of these people and animals. One should not neglect the appearance of blood and cough. Excretions and water collected after washing the feet should be thrown out of the home at once. Getting touched by the people who criticize deities, ancestors, Yagya, mantra etc. is also defiling. Sighting of the Sun however purifies the defiled person.

Duties of the woman: Different male and female deities dwell at the threshold of the home. Hence this portion of the home should be worshipped properly everyday. At dawn, the threshold should not be left vacant or it may have adverse effect on one's lineage. The whole area inside the home should be plastered with cow dung daily or washed with pure water. All these activities should be carried out by the better half of the householder. Those women, who prepare food during the last quarter of the night, suffer from infertility in future births. Those women, who do not sweep their home in the evening, remain unmarried and are bereft of wealth in future births. Such women also lose their wealth, lifespan and reputation. Kicking the following things like broom, hearth and mortar etc. or touching them with feet also leads to the loss of progeny and wealth.

The householder should not use broken seat, board and black blanket for sitting purpose. He should not comb his hair while facing south. Those who do not dine, perform Havan or make donations at the appropriate time are no better than eunuchs. Those who shun these activities despite having wealth are worse than mice. Those who do not respect the deities, teachers, wife of the teacher, cow, Brahmin etc. are boycotted by the society. Naked are those who are devoid of Vedas, other religious scriptures and rituals. Such a house is really contemptible, which is boycotted by the Brahmins and where daily routines are not followed regularly.

After birth or death in the family, a Brahmin becomes purified in ten days. During this period of ten days, he should avoid all the religious activities. In similar conditions, a Kshatriya gets purified in twelve days after a birth or death in his family, a Vaishya in fifteen days and a Shudra in one month. Dead body of a person should be cremated outside the boundaries of the village. His family members should offer oblation of water to pacify his soul on the first, fourth, seventh and ninth days after the cremation. Ashes should be collected from the fourth day. In case of deaths caused by a snake bite or poisoning family members may get purified after a day. There is no impurity in case of the death of a child, an immigrant and the one who has renounced everything. Even their cremation is not carried out nor oblation of water is made.

If one more death occurs in the family while the mourning period of the earlier death is still continuing, impurity of the second death lasts as long as that of the first one. Similar rules are applied to the impurity caused by the birth. Thus abiding by these norms, the householder can easily attain the four objectives of life that is Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha.

KING ALARKA AND HIS QUERIES ABOUT YOGA

KING ALARKA'S RING AND WISDOM

After reaching youth-hood, Prince Alarka got married. By that time, his father King Ritudhwaj had also grown old. Hence before Grihastha, he crowned his son as the new king. At the time of crowning, queen Madalasa presented him a ring and said -

'O son! This ring contains a note which will teach you on how a king should administer the kingdom.' Saying this, Madalasa blessed Alarka and left the palace with her husband Ritudhwaj to spend their lives in the forest.

After his accession to the throne, King Alarka ruled justly. In due course of time, he got many sons. He followed the dictates of Dharma, Arth and Kama while ruling his kingdom. Inspite of enjoying all the luxuries, Alarka still could not experience bliss and felt as if he was missing something in his life. Very soon, Subahu came to learn about the royal luxuries of his brother Alarka and got tempted to enjoy the same luxuries. To attain his objective, Subahu took the help of the king of Kashi. The king of Kashi sent an envoy to Alarka with a message to give the kingdom to Subahu, which Alarka refused. Instead, he sent a reply that the request must be made by Subahu himself. 'I will not give him my kingdom out of fear of war,' said Alarka. But Subahu did not pay heed and with the help of the king of Kashi, launched a massive attack on his kingdom and conquered it. Now Alarka's days of sorrow had begun.

He then remembered the ring presented by his mother Madalasa. He opened the ring and found a letter in it. The letter said- 'When you lose your everything, give up the company of your present advisors and join the company of learned sages.' This message made Alarka to pine for the company of the learned sages. Very soon, he went to the refuge of Dattatreya and requested him to remove his miseries. Dattatreya assured him of removing his miseries at once but before doing that, he wanted to know the reasons for his miseries. Alarka said- 'I do not long for pleasures but my elder brother wants to grab my kingdom.'

KING ALARKA AND HIS QUERIES ABOUT YOGA

KING ALARKA'S RING AND WISDOM

After reaching youth-hood, Prince Alarka got married. By that time, his father King Ritudhwaj had also grown old. Hence before Grihastha, he crowned his son as the new king. At the time of crowning, queen Madalasa presented him a ring and said -

'O son! This ring contains a note which will teach you on how a king should administer the kingdom.' Saying this, Madalasa blessed Alarka and left the palace with her husband Ritudhwaj to spend their lives in the forest.

After his accession to the throne, King Alarka ruled justly. In due course of time, he got many sons. He followed the dictates of Dharma, Arth and Kama while ruling his kingdom. Inspite of enjoying all the luxuries, Alarka still could not experience bliss and felt as if he was missing something in his life. Very soon, Subahu came to learn about the royal luxuries of his brother Alarka and got tempted to enjoy the same luxuries. To attain his objective, Subahu took the help of the king of Kashi. The king of Kashi sent an envoy to Alarka with a message to give the kingdom to Subahu, which Alarka refused. Instead, he sent a reply that the request must be made by Subahu himself. 'I will not give him my kingdom out of fear of war,' said Alarka. But Subahu did not pay heed and with the help of the king of Kashi, launched a massive attack on his kingdom and conquered it. Now Alarka's days of sorrow had begun.

He then remembered the ring presented by his mother Madalasa. He opened the ring and found a letter in it. The letter said- 'When you lose your everything, give up the company of your present advisors and join the company of learned sages.' This message made Alarka to pine for the company of the learned sages. Very soon, he went to the refuge of Dattatreya and requested him to remove his miseries. Dattatreya assured him of removing his miseries at once but before doing that, he wanted to know the reasons for his miseries. Alarka said- 'I do not long for pleasures but my elder brother wants to grab my kingdom.'

DATTATREYA PREACHES ALARKA

Alarka says- 'O lord! With the arising of disenchantment in my heart, I have no miseries now. Only those people feel drowned in the ocean of

miseries who are attached to worldly things. A man feels all kinds of sorrows due to his attachments towards the luxuries in which his mind indulges. Now neither sorrow nor joy can affect me.'

Dattatreya says- 'O king! Whatever you said is correct. Attachment is the cause of both sorrow and happiness. It is because of the knowledge I gave to you that the 'mist of attachment 1 has disappeared from your heart. A small sprout of ego ultimately develops into a huge tree of ignorance. Affection is the trunk of this tree. Home and family are the branches and wife and children are the leaves of this tree. Wealth and cereals are the flowers and happiness and sorrow are the fruits of this tree. Relation that emerges out of affection is the canopy of this tree. This tree grows day by day and obscures the path of liberation. This tree is full of desires and those who sit under the lee of this tree can never attain salvation. Hence felling of this tree is of foremost importance for a person desirous of attaining 'Brahmatva.'

DATTATREYA PREACHES ALARKA

Alarka says- 'O lord! With the arising of disenchantment in my heart, I have no miseries now. Only those people feel drowned in the ocean of miseries who are attached to worldly things. A man feels all kinds of sorrows due to his attachments towards the luxuries in which his mind indulges. Now neither sorrow nor joy can affect me.'

Dattatreya says- 'O king! Whatever you said is correct. Attachment is the cause of both sorrow and happiness. It is because of the knowledge I gave to you that the 'mist of attachment' has disappeared from your heart. A small sprout of ego ultimately develops into a huge tree of ignorance. Affection is the trunk of this tree. Home and family are the branches and wife and children are the leaves of this tree. Wealth and cereals are the flowers and happiness and sorrow are the fruits of this tree. Relation that emerges out of affection is the canopy of this tree. This tree grows day by day and obscures the path of liberation. This tree is full of desires and those who sit under the lee of this tree can never attain salvation. Hence felling of this tree is of foremost importance for a person desirous of attaining 'Brahmatva.'

YOGADHYAY

Dattatreya says- O king! With the attainment of knowledge, people come to conjugate with the Supreme Almighty and which results into

dispersion of their ignorance. To attain Moksha, it is necessary for a man to shun attachment first of all. Only after that, he will become free from sorrows. When he becomes free from sorrow, he unites with the supreme almighty. This phenomenon is known as Yoga. Unification with the supreme almighty enables a man to attain knowledge and finally Moksha (salvation). It is therefore essential for the all those seeking salvation that first of all they should renounce affection and attachment for the worldly objects including their near and dear ones.

Knowledge and renunciation are nothing but two sides of the same coin and one is necessary to give rise to the other. Home is nothing but the place for staying, food is nothing but the energy required sustaining our body and knowledge is nothing but an aid to attain salvation. Anything that caused obstacles in the way of salvation is ignorance. A living being is bound to receive the fruits of action no matter whether they are good or bad. Hence one should carry out his duties without bothering for the results. With the attenuation of the results of the action performed in the previous births, a living being becomes free from the cycles of life and death. With the attainment of Yoga, Yogis take refuge in none other than Brahma. But the path of attaining Yoga is indeed difficult, if not impossible. One has to conquer his soul first of all because the soul itself is regarded as invincible. Control of physical impurities with the help of Pranayama, sins by determination, lust by self-restrains and contemplation on God are the ways to conquer the soul.

YOGADHYAY

Dattatreya says- O king! With the attainment of knowledge, people come to conjugate with the Supreme Almighty and which results into dispersion of their ignorance. To attain Moksha, it is necessary for a man to shun attachment first of all. Only after that, he will become free from sorrows. When he becomes free from sorrow, he unites with the supreme almighty. This phenomenon is known as Yoga. Unification with the supreme almighty enables a man to attain knowledge and finally Moksha (salvation). It is therefore essential for the all those seeking salvation that first of all they should renounce affection and attachment for the worldly objects including their near and dear ones.

Knowledge and renunciation are nothing but two sides of the same coin and one is necessary to give rise to the other. Home is nothing but the place for staying, food is nothing but the energy required sustaining our body and knowledge is nothing but an aid to attain salvation. Anything that caused obstacles in the way of salvation is ignorance. A living being is bound to receive the fruits of action no matter whether they are good or bad. Hence one should carry out his duties without bothering for the results. With the attenuation of the results of the action performed in the previous births, a living being becomes free from the cycles of life and death. With the attainment of Yoga, Yogis take refuge in none other than Brahma. But the path of attaining Yoga is indeed difficult, if not impossible. One has to conquer his soul first of all because the soul itself is regarded as invincible. Control of physical impurities with the help of Pranayama, sins by determination, lust by self-restrains and contemplation on God are the ways to conquer the soul.

PERFECTION IN YOGA AND DAILY ROUTINE

Dattatreya says-During the process of conquering the soul, different kinds of allurements begins to divert the mind of the Yogis. It is

imperative for the Yogi to keep his mind busy by observing fast, worshipping and contemplating in God. It is the duty of the Yogi to always contemplate on God, only then he can seek solace in Him. Thus, after controlling his senses, a Yogi ought to eat and sleep less, attain unification with the Supreme Being. O king! A Yogi unifies with Brahma once his physical and mental faults are removed. Then, he never separates from the Supreme Being.

Alarka says- O lord, now kindly narrate about the daily routine, a Yogi should abide by in order to preserve his piousness.

Dattatreya says- O king! Respect and insult are the two reasons for love and hatred. Yogis attain perfection by understanding insult as respect and vice versa. A Yogi should therefore never attend social functions like Shradha, marriage ceremonies or other festivities. He should not accept the hospitality of others and should shun unnecessary journeys. A Yogi should seek alms only after the householder and his family has dined. A Yogi should accept alms only from those households whose inmates are gentle, religious and free from blemishes and should accept things like whey, milk, fruits, edible roots, gram flour etc. Before going to dine, a Yogi should offer his food to the deities reciting he following mantras- PRANANYAY SWAHA APANAY SWAHA SAMANAY SWAHA UDANAY SWAHA VYANAY SWAHA

After reciting these mantras one by one and offering food to the deities who are present in his body as different forms of air, the Yogi may now proceed to dine.

Control of senses and greed, celibacy, renunciation and non-violence are the five resolutions of a Yogi. Control of anger, service to the Guru, sanctity, eating less and studying Vedas regularly are the five norms for a Yogi. A Yogi must practice meditation at a desolate place, forest, cave or peak of a mountain. A true celibate has full control over his speech, mind and action. Iron and gold have equal worth in his eye; he loves no one and hates no one.

Dattatreya says- Those Yogis who abide by their resolution are never degraded from their supreme position. Such Yogis always recite Om while contemplating on the eternal God. 'A', 'U' and 'M', these three syllables

constitute the body OM or AUM. These three syllables represent the virtues (gunas) of Satva, Tamas and Rajas respectively. Thus, by contemplating on God and reciting Om, a Yogi ultimately achieves unification with that eternal spirit. But there are still some disastrous traps that a Yogi should guard himself against, otherwise his entire penance might turn futile at the time of death. Hence every Yogi must be aware of these disastrous traps.

PERFECTION IN YOGA AND DAILY ROUTINE

Dattatreya says-During the process of conquering the soul, different kinds of allurements begins to divert the mind of the Yogis. It is imperative for the Yogi to keep his mind busy by observing fast, worshipping and contemplating in God. It is the duty of the Yogi to always contemplate on God, only then he can seek solace in Him. Thus, after controlling his senses, a Yogi ought to eat and sleep less, attain unification with the Supreme Being. O king! A Yogi unifies with Brahma once his physical and mental faults are removed. Then, he never separates from the Supreme Being.

Alarka says- O lord, now kindly narrate about the daily routine, a Yogi should abide by in order to preserve his piousness.

Dattatreya says- O king! Respect and insult are the two reasons for love and hatred. Yogis attain perfection by understanding insult as respect and vice versa. A Yogi should therefore never attend social functions like Shradha, marriage ceremonies or other festivities. He should not accept the hospitality of others and should shun unnecessary journeys. A Yogi should seek alms only after the householder and his family has dined. A Yogi should accept alms only from those households whose inmates are gentle, religious and free from blemishes and should accept things like whey, milk, fruits, edible roots, gram flour etc. Before going to dine, a Yogi should offer his food to the deities reciting he following mantras- PRANANYAY SWAHA APANAY SWAHA SAMANAY SWAHA UDANAY SWAHA VYANAY SWAHA

After reciting these mantras one by one and offering food to the deities who are present in his body as different forms of air, the Yogi may now proceed to dine.

Control of senses and greed, celibacy, renunciation and non-violence are the five resolutions of a Yogi. Control of anger, service to the Guru, sanctity, eating less and studying Vedas regularly are the five norms for a Yogi. A Yogi must practice meditation at a desolate place, forest, cave or peak of a mountain. A true celibate has full control over his speech, mind and action. Iron and gold have equal worth in his eye; he loves no one and hates no one.

Dattatreya says- Those Yogis who abide by their resolution are never degraded from their supreme position. Such Yogis always recite Om while contemplating on the eternal God. 'A', 'U' and 'M', these three syllables constitute the body OM or AUM. These three syllables represent the virtues (gunas) of Satva, Tamas and Rajas respectively. Thus, by contemplating on God and reciting Om, a Yogi ultimately achieves unification with that eternal spirit. But there are still some disastrous traps that a Yogi should guard himself against, otherwise his entire penance might turn futile at the time of death. Hence every Yogi must be aware of these disastrous traps.

DESCRIPTION OF DISASTROUS TRAPS

Dattatreya says- A person who is unable to see the path of the deities, or the heavenly bodies like- Dhruva, Shukra (Venus), Soma (Moon), or his

own shadow or Goddess Arundhati, must understand that his death is near. For those people to whom, the Sun appears without radiance but fire appears as the Sun, die within eleven months. Sighting of gold and silver in urine or stools signifies death within ten months. Those who see ghosts, Gandharvas and gold tree in the dreams live for nine months only. Those who become fat or thin suddenly live for eight months more. Those Yogis whose heels appear cracked while walking on sand or mud die within seven months. Getting perched on the body by volatile birds like vulture, pigeon, owl, crow etc. indicates that the concerned person will live for only six months. Those who see their shadow in opposite direction live for four or five months more only. Those who sight lightning without clouds or rainbow during the night time, in their dream live for two or three months more. Those who cannot see their reflection in ghee, oil, water and mirror die within a month. A person whose body smells like a cadaver die within fifteen days. Those whose hands and feet remain dry even after taking bath and dry even after taking light refreshments live only for ten days. Those who sight hair, cinders, ash, snakes and dried rivers in the dream, die on the eleventh day. Those who feel hungry even after eating to their fill also die soon.

O king! There are many more disastrous symptoms that indicate death. A Yogi must always be alert regarding these signs. Whenever a Yogi perceives the appearance of all or some of these disastrous symptoms, he must at once take to Yoga to minimise the effects.

Brahmagyan- A Yogi experiences extreme joy when he meditates while doing Yoga. Only then can he experience Brahma. Physical body is ephemeral; hence a true Yogi does not mourn over the loss of physical body. Hence, a Yogi must train his mind in Yoga ignoring sorrow or affection. This is indeed a difficult task to achieve.

Alarka says- O Brahmin! By your blessings, my ignorance has ended. Now I will do everything so that ignorance does not grip me once again.

Then taking Dattatreya's permission, Alarka went back to the king of Kashi and said- 'O king! You have a desire for the kingdom, so take this kingdom and enjoy its luxuries yourself or give it to Subahu.' The king of Kashi asked Alarka as to why he was renouncing the kingdom without fighting a war. He also tried to instigate Alarka by saying that his conduct

did not suit the Kshatriyas. Alarka said- 'Only Brahma is truth, all the other things are false. Now controlling my senses, I will attain perfection in Yoga.'

DESCRIPTION OF DISASTROUS TRAPS

Dattatreya says- A person who is unable to see the path of the deities, or the heavenly bodies like- Dhruva, Shukra (Venus), Soma (Moon), or his own shadow or Goddess Arundhati, must understand that his death is near. For those people to whom, the Sun appears without radiance but fire appears as the Sun, die within eleven months. Sighting of gold and silver in urine or stools signifies death within ten months. Those who see ghosts, Gandharvas and gold tree in the dreams live for nine months only. Those who become fat or thin suddenly live for eight months more. Those Yogis whose heels appear cracked while walking on sand or mud die within seven months. Getting perched on the body by volatile birds like vulture, pigeon, owl, crow etc. indicates that the concerned person will live for only six months. Those who see their shadow in opposite direction live for four or five months more only. Those who sight lightning without clouds or rainbow during the night time, in their dream live for two or three months more. Those who cannot see their reflection in ghee, oil, water and mirror die within a month. A person whose body smells like a cadaver die within fifteen days. Those whose hands and feet remain dry even after taking bath and dry even after taking light refreshments live only for ten days. Those who sight hair, cinders, ash, snakes and dried rivers in the dream, die on the eleventh day. Those who feel hungry even after eating to their fill also die soon.

O king! There are many more disastrous symptoms that indicate death. A Yogi must always be alert regarding these signs. Whenever a Yogi perceives the appearance of all or some of these disastrous symptoms, he must at once take to Yoga to minimise the effects.

Brahmagyan- A Yogi experiences extreme joy when he meditates while doing Yoga. Only then can he experience Brahma. Physical body is ephemeral; hence a true Yogi does not mourn over the loss of physical body. Hence, a Yogi must train his mind in Yoga ignoring sorrow or affection. This is indeed a difficult task to achieve.

Alarka says- O Brahmin! By your blessings, my ignorance has ended. Now I will do everything so that ignorance does not grip me once again.

Then taking Dattatreya's permission, Alarka went back to the king of Kashi and said- 'O king! You have a desire for the kingdom, so take this kingdom and enjoy its luxuries yourself or give it to Subahu.' The king of Kashi asked Alarka as to why he was renouncing the kingdom without fighting a war. He also tried to instigate Alarka by saying that his conduct did not suit the Kshatriyas. Alarka said- 'Only Brahma is truth, all the other things are false. Now controlling my senses, I will attain perfection in Yoga.'

ALARKA MASTERS YOGA AND PENANCE OF JADA AND HIS FATHER

Words of Alarka pleased the king of Kashi. Even, Subahu got up gladly and after embracing Alarka said to the king of Kashi- "O king, I had taken your refuge to win the kingdom. Now, I have got it without fighting a war and without a drop of blood being shed. But, I am leaving now, renouncing everything."

The king of Kashi said- "Subahu, why had you taken refuge in me? What have you received now?"

Subahu said- "O king! My younger brother Alarka had been so far indulging in luxuries despite having metaphysical knowledge. He was in fact experiencing miseries in his household. When the miseries cross all limits, only then renunciation arises in the mind, as is the case with Alarka. That was why I had taken your refuge. My job is finished now. So I am leaving to attain perfection in Yoga. O king, I regard those people who ignore their near and dear ones in their miseries as heartless.

Such people are degraded from their position of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and are criticised everywhere."

The king of Kashi said- "O Subahu, You have saved your brother Alarka. Now kindly save me also."

Subahu said- "Attainment of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are the four major objectives for the attainment of which humans have been created. You have already attained Dharma, Artha and Kama. Only Moksha remains to be attained now. 'It is mine', 'It is me' etc. are expressions of ego. Guarding the self from these thoughts is the true knowledge. A man must know 'What is to be known? 'Who is to know?' and 'Who is he?' A knowledge of these automatically leads to the knowledge of all." Saying these words, Subahu left the palace.

The king of Kashi too returned to his kingdom. Alarka crowned his elder son as the new king and he began to practice Yoga in a forest. After many years of rigorous practice, Alarka attained salvation and his abode in Brahma loka.

The Brahmin's son said- "O father! Now you too must take refuge in Yoga in order to attain Brahma. I too will try to attain salvation."

The birds say- "O Brahmin! Thus the father and son began their penance and attained salvation.

ALARKA MASTERS YOGA AND PENANCE OF JADA AND HIS FATHER

Words of Alarka pleased the king of Kashi. Even, Subahu got up gladly and after embracing Alarka said to the king of Kashi- "O king, I had taken your refuge to win the kingdom. Now, I have got it without fighting a war and without a drop of blood being shed. But, I am leaving now, renouncing everything."

The king of Kashi said- "Subahu, why had you taken refuge in me? What have you received now?"

Subahu said- "O king! My younger brother Alarka had been so far indulging in luxuries despite having metaphysical knowledge. He was in fact experiencing miseries in his household. When the miseries cross all limits, only then renunciation arises in the mind, as is the case with Alarka. That was why I had taken your refuge. My job is finished now. So I am leaving to attain perfection in Yoga. O king, I regard those people who ignore their near and dear ones in their miseries as heartless.

Such people are degraded from their position of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and are criticised everywhere."

The king of Kashi said- "O Subahu, You have saved your brother Alarka. Now kindly save me also."

Subahu said- "Attainment of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are the four major objectives for the attainment of which humans have been created. You have already attained Dharma, Artha and Kama. Only Moksha remains to be attained now. 'It is mine', 'It is me' etc. are expressions of ego. Guarding the self from these thoughts is the true knowledge. A man must know 'What is to be known? 'Who is to know?' and 'Who is he?' A knowledge of these automatically leads to the knowledge of all." Saying these words, Subahu left the palace.

The king of Kashi too returned to his kingdom. Alarka crowned his elder son as the new king and he began to practice Yoga in a forest. After many years of rigorous practice, Alarka attained salvation and his abode in Brahma loka.

The Brahmin's son said- "O father! Now you too must take refuge in Yoga in order to attain Brahma. I too will try to attain salvation."

The birds say- "O Brahmin! Thus the father and son began their penance and attained salvation.

THE UNIVERSE AND LORD BRAHMA'S MANIFESTATION

THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

Jaimini thanked the birds for enlightening him with self-knowledge. But he was still not satisfied. There were many questions to which he had no answers. He asked the birds-

'How did this universe come into being? What will happen to it during the time of final annihilation? How did the deities, the sages, the ancestors and the living creatures originate? How did the Manvantaras arrive? I am anxious to know about all these things.'

The birds replied- 'O Jaimini! We salute the same Jagannath who creates in the form of lord Brahma, nurtures the world as Lord Vishnu and ultimately annihilates the world as Lord Shiva in his most terrifying form. We will now reveal the knowledge which was once narrated by sage Markandeya.'

The birds then narrated the following tale as was originally told by sage Markandeya. 'In the beginning of creation, as soon as lord Brahma manifested himself, all the four Vedas and eighteen Puranas came out from his four mouths. Lord Brahma then created the Saptarishis merely by wishing, who took all the Vedas and Puranas in their possession.'

'Later on, sage Chyavan got the Puranas from one of the Saptarishis- sage Bhrigu and read out its contents to the assembled sages. The sages then retold the Puranas to Daksha. Daksha narrated the contents of the Puranas to me (Markandeya). The virtues of listening to Puranas are capable of destroying all sins of a man. Now I am going to reveal to you that secret knowledge of Purana as was told to me by Daksha.'

'Brahma- the cause and effect of everything pervades the universe even after the final annihilation. All the three gunas are present in him. When the time is appropriate for commencing the process of creation, the whole atmosphere is covered by the great element (Mahatatva), which itself comprises of the three basic gunas- Satva (pure), Rajas (semi-pure) and Tamas (dark).'

'Ego manifests itself from the great element (Mahatatva). Even the ego remains covered by the great element. The ego then creates 'Shabda tanmatra' (subtle forms of matter related with sound). The sky which symbolizes the Shabda (sound) is created from this very Shabda

tanmatra.' 'The ego then covers the whole sky. After that Sparsh tanmatra (subtle forms of matter related with touch) comes into being. Air, which signifies the quality of touch, then comes into being. After the creation of air, light is created without which the forms and appearance cannot be perceived.'

'The deformity of life results into the creation of Rasa matra. From this very Rasa matra, water comes into being. The water is enveloped by the Roop matra (subtle forms of appearance). The water then gets deformed and as a result Gandha matra comes into being, from which the earth is created. All the worlds are established in this earth.'

'First of all, the gunas enter into the atoms and create the seven basic elements which are a must for procreation. The seven basic elements then establish themselves in Purusha and Prakriti. The union of Purusha and Prakriti results into the creation of egg. This egg keeps expanding in its size while being in water.'

THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

Jaimini thanked the birds for enlightening him with self-knowledge. But he was still not satisfied. There were many questions to which he had no answers. He asked the birds-

'How did this universe come into being? What will happen to it during the time of final annihilation? How did the deities, the sages, the ancestors and the living creatures originate? How did the Manvantaras arrive? I am anxious to know about all these things.'

The birds replied- 'O Jaimini! We salute the same Jagannath who creates in the form of lord Brahma, nurtures the world as Lord Vishnu and ultimately annihilates the world as Lord Shiva in his most terrifying form. We will now reveal the knowledge which was once narrated by sage Markandeya.'

The birds then narrated the following tale as was originally told by sage Markandeya. 'In the beginning of creation, as soon as lord Brahma manifested himself, all the four Vedas and eighteen Puranas came out from his four mouths. Lord Brahma then created the Saptarishis merely by wishing, who took all the Vedas and Puranas in their possession.'

'Later on, sage Chyavan got the Puranas from one of the Saptarishis- sage Bhrigu and read out its contents to the assembled sages. The sages then retold the Puranas to Daksha. Daksha narrated the contents of the Puranas to me (Markandeya). The virtues of listening to Puranas are capable of destroying all sins of a man. Now I am going to reveal to you that secret knowledge of Purana as was told to me by Daksha.'

'Brahma- the cause and effect of everything pervades the universe even after the final annihilation. All the three gunas are present in him. When the time is appropriate for commencing the process of creation, the whole atmosphere is covered by the great element (Mahatatva), which itself comprises of the three basic gunas- Satva (pure), Rajas (semi-pure) and Tamas (dark).'

'Ego manifests itself from the great element (Mahatatva). Even the ego remains covered by the great element. The ego then creates 'Shabda tanmatra' (subtle forms of matter related with sound). The sky which symbolizes the Shabda (sound) is created from this very Shabda tanmatra.' 'The ego then covers the whole sky. After that Sparsh tanmatra (subtle forms of matter related with touch) comes into being. Air, which signifies the quality of touch, then comes into being. After the creation of air, light is created without which the forms and appearance cannot be perceived.'

'The deformity of life results into the creation of Rasa matra. From this very Rasa matra, water comes into being. The water is enveloped by the Roop matra (subtle forms of appearance). The water then gets deformed and as a result Gandha matra comes into being, from which the earth is created. All the worlds are established in this earth.'

'First of all, the gunas enter into the atoms and create the seven basic elements which are a must for procreation. The seven basic elements then establish themselves in Purusha and Prakriti. The union of Purusha and Prakriti results into the creation of egg. This egg keeps expanding in its size while being in water.'

'Lord Brahma who is also known as Kshetragya and who is also the creator of all the souls dwells in that egg.' The same Brahma pervades all the three worlds. All the creatures of the world including the deities, demons and human beings along with islands, mountains, oceans, air

and sky etc. are present inside the egg.'

'The Mother Nature along with the great element covers this egg. This way, the seven natural coverings envelop the egg. Beyond the Prakriti (nature) is established the Purusha (Almighty).' 'Now I am going to reveal the identity of Brahma to you. Just as drops of water fall down from the body of a wet man immersed in water, in the same way, Lord Brahma too discards off the egg in the end. The nature is nothing else but Kshetra (space, area) and Brahma is also known as Kshetragya. This way, the whole creation came into being just like lightning.

'Lord Brahma who is also known as Kshetragya and who is also the creator of all the souls dwells in that egg.' The same Brahma pervades all the three worlds. All the creatures of the world including the deities, demons and human beings along with islands, mountains, oceans, air and sky etc. are present inside the egg.'

'The Mother Nature along with the great element covers this egg. This way, the seven natural coverings envelop the egg. Beyond the Prakriti (nature) is established the Purusha (Almighty).' 'Now I am going to reveal the identity of Brahma to you. Just as drops of water fall down from the body of a wet man immersed in water, in the same way, Lord Brahma too discards off the egg in the end. The nature is nothing else but Kshetra (space, area) and Brahma is also known as Kshetragya. This way, the whole creation came into being just like lightning.

LORD BRAHMA'S LIFESPAN

Kraustuki said- 'Tell me! O lord! How were the living beings created as the period of final annihilation was approaching its end.'

Markandeya replied- 'When the nature establishes herself in the soul of the Purusha (supreme Almighty), all the created matter gets annihilated. Prakriti and Purusha are established in the mode of parallelism. During that period, Satva and Tamas become neutrally balanced. Even the quality of Rajas establishes itself within the qualities of Satva and Tamas.'

'The life span of Brahma consists of Dwiparardha. The day and night of Brahma are of equal duration. Brahma is the origin of this universe. He is the inconceivable soul, the supreme lord and the cause of all the events. He is beyond the reach of activities. He enters into Prakriti and Purusha- excites both of them to get unified. When Prakriti gets excited, the Supreme Lord manifests Himself in the egg as Brahma. He then commences his creation. The same Brahma attains the form of Vishnu due to the effect of his Satva guna and nurtures the whole creation. Under the influence of Tamas guna, He attains the form of Rudra and finally annihilates the whole creation. He then goes into hibernation.'

'This way, the same Almighty God in his three different forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh performs his duties of creation, nurturing and annihilation respectively. The life span of Brahma consists of one hundred years. The division of time is as follows- One Kashtha consists of fifteen Nimeshas. One Kala consists of thirty Kashthas whereas thirty Kalas make one Muhurta. One day and night of this material world consists of thirty Muhurtas. Thirty days and nights are equivalent to one month or two fortnights (Pakshas).'

'Six months make one Ayan. Two Ayans make a year. A day and night of the deities are equivalent to one year of this material world. Similarly twelve thousand years of the deities make the four yugas. Satya Yuga consists of the four thousand years of the deities. Treta Yuga consists of three thousand years of the deities. Dwapar Yuga consists of two thousand years of the deities whereas Kali Yuga consists of one thousand years of the deities. Similarly Sandhya (evening) period of Satya Yuga consists of four hundred years and Sandhyansh (part of evening) consists of the same period that is four hundred years. Thus the total number of years that Satya Yuga has come up to 4000+400+400= 4800 years. In the same way, the Sandhya and Sandhyansh of Treta Yuga consist of 300 years each. Thus, the total number of years in Treta Yuga comes up to 3000+300+300= 3600 years. Sandhya and Sandhyansh period of

Dwapar Yuga is of 200 years each. Thus the total number of years in Dwapar Yuga comes up to 2000+200+200= 2400 years. Sandhya and Sandhyansh period of Kali Yuga are of 100 years each. Thus the total number of years in Kali Yuga comes up to 1000+100+100= 1200 years.

A day of Brahma consists of thousand times of the twelve thousand years of the deities. Fourteen Manus appear in succession during the whole day of Brahma. Each Manavantar comprises of a Manu and his progenies, Indra and the other deities, Saptarishis ganas and Nripati ganas etc.

A Manavantar consists of seventy-one Chaturyugas. On the basis of the years of this material world, a Manavantar consists of 30,67,20,000 years or 8,52,000 years of the deities. A Brahma's day consists of 4,29,40,00,000 years of this world or 1,19,28,000 years of the deities. The dissolution, which occurs at the end of the day of Brahma, is also known as causal dissolution

LORD BRAHMA'S LIFESPAN

Kraustuki said- 'Tell me! O lord! How were the living beings created as the period of final annihilation was approaching its end.'

Markandeya replied- 'When the nature establishes herself in the soul of the Purusha (supreme Almighty), all the created matter gets annihilated. Prakriti and Purusha are established in the mode of parallelism. During that period, Satva and Tamas become neutrally balanced. Even the quality of Rajas establishes itself within the qualities of Satva and Tamas.'

'The life span of Brahma consists of Dwiparardha. The day and night of Brahma are of equal duration. Brahma is the origin of this universe. He is the inconceivable soul, the supreme lord and the cause of all the events. He is beyond the reach of activities. He enters into Prakriti and Purusha- excites both of them to get unified. When Prakriti gets excited, the Supreme Lord manifests Himself in the egg as Brahma. He then commences his creation. The same Brahma attains the form of Vishnu due to the effect of his Satva guna and nurtures the whole creation. Under the influence of Tamas guna, He attains the form of Rudra and finally annihilates the whole creation. He then goes into hibernation.'

'This way, the same Almighty God in his three different forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh performs his duties of creation, nurturing and annihilation respectively. The life span of Brahma consists of one hundred years. The division of time is as follows- One Kashtha consists of fifteen Nimeshas. One Kala consists of thirty Kashthas whereas thirty Kalas make one Muhurta. One day and night of this material world consists of thirty Muhurtas. Thirty days and nights are equivalent to one month or two fortnights (Pakshas).'

'Six months make one Ayan. Two Ayans make a year. A day and night of the deities are equivalent to one year of this material world. Similarly twelve thousand years of the deities make the four yugas. Satya Yuga consists of the four thousand years of the deities. Treta Yuga consists of three thousand years of the deities. Dwapar Yuga consists of two thousand years of the deities whereas Kali Yuga consists of one thousand years of the deities. Similarly Sandhya (evening) period of Satya Yuga consists of four hundred years and Sandhyansh (part of evening) consists of the same period that is four hundred years. Thus the total number of years that Satya Yuga has come up to 4000+400+400= 4800 years. In the same way, the Sandhya and Sandhyansh of Treta Yuga consist of 300 years each. Thus, the total number of years in Treta Yuga comes up to 3000+300+300= 3600 years. Sandhya and Sandhyansh period of Dwapar Yuga is of 200 years each. Thus the total number of years in Dwapar Yuga comes up to 2000+200+200= 2400 years. Sandhya and Sandhyansh period of Kali Yuga are of 100 years each. Thus the total number of years in Kali Yuga comes up to 1000+100+100= 1200 years.

A day of Brahma consists of thousand times of the twelve thousand years of the deities. Fourteen Manus appear in succession during the whole day of Brahma. Each Manavantar comprises of a Manu and his progenies, Indra and the other deities, Saptarishis ganas and Nripati ganas etc.

A Manavantar consists of seventy-one Chaturyugas. On the basis of the years of this material world, a Manavantar consists of 30,67,20,000 years or 8,52,000 years of the deities. A Brahma's day consists of 4,29,40,00,000 years of this world or 1,19,28,000 years of the deities. The dissolution, which occurs at the end of the day of Brahma, is also known as causal dissolution

(Naimittik Pralaya). During the time of causal dissolution, all the residents of Bhur, Bhuva and Swarga lokas temporarily go to Mahar loka. The residents of Mahar loka shift their base to Jana loka. The entire universe is submerged in the ocean during the time of causal dissolution

and this is the time for Brahma to take rest i.e. at night. Brahma starts his creation at the end of the night. This way, after the completion of three hundred and sixty years of Brahma, his one-year is complete. One hundred such years of Brahma make one Para and five hundred such years make one Parardha. One Parardha of Brahma has already passed at the end of which Padram Mahakalpa occurred. The present period, which falls under the second Parardha, is also known as Varaha Kalpa.

NATURAL AND FLAWED CREATIONS

Kraustuki asked curiously- Tell me how Brahma did his creations?'

Markandeya replied- 'When Brahma got up from his sleep after the end of dissolution (Pralaya) named Padram, he found a void all around himself. He remembered Narayana who is also known by the name of Nastanu i.e. one who dwells in water. Narayana was engrossed in his eternal sleep. After waking up, he rescued the earth, submerged in the ocean just like he had done in the previous Kalpas by taking the forms of a boar, a fish and tortoise etc. But even after the earth was brought up from the seabed and was established above the ocean, it was still swinging like a boat. Narayana then created the mountains to stop the earth from swinging. But the mountains were burnt down by Agni (fire) named Samvartak. The mountains submerged into the ocean. The mountains after having displaced the water had become fixed at their respective places. Therefore, Narayana divided the whole earth into seven islands and created the four lokas just like before. After that, five Avidyas came into being. This way, the whole creation established themselves in five ways. The whole creation was hidden in darkness till this period. After this, Narayana created the ignorant animals, which symbolised the Tamas guna. After the animals the deities who symbolised the Satva guna were created.'

'Brahma was extremely satisfied by the creations of Narayana. But he was desirous of creating even more superior creatures. As a result a group of Sadhakas named Arvaksrota came into being. These Sadhakas were humans who possessed Rajas guna. The fifth creation of Anugraha was itself sub-divided into four parts- Viparyaya, Siddhi, Shanti and Srishti. The sixth creation was of those special people who had the knowledge of past and present events. These people had wives, enjoyed life in a

balanced way but were of evil nature. These people were known as Bhutadik.'

'The first creation was related with the manifestation of lord Brahma himself. This great creation was known as the Maha Srishti. The second creation related with the part of Brahma is called Bhutsarga. The third creation is called Prakrit and which consists of creatures possessing intelligence and flawed sensual perceptions. The fourth creation consists of the Sthawars who are unable to move (e.g. vegetation). The fifth creation consists of four-footed animals. The sixth creation consists of the deities whereas the seventh creation that of human beings which originates from Arvaksrota. The eighth creation is known as Anugraha. The ninth creation of Brahma is known as Prakrit (natural) and Vikari (flawed). These are the nine types of creation of Brahma. The root causes of this universe are Prakrit and Vikari.'

(Naimittik Pralaya). During the time of causal dissolution, all the residents of Bhur, Bhuva and Swarga lokas temporarily go to Mahar loka. The residents of Mahar loka shift their base to Jana loka. The entire universe is submerged in the ocean during the time of causal dissolution and this is the time for Brahma to take rest i.e. at night. Brahma starts his creation at the end of the night. This way, after the completion of three hundred and sixty years of Brahma, his one-year is complete. One hundred such years of Brahma make one Para and five hundred such years make one Parardha. One Parardha of Brahma has already passed at the end of which Padram Mahakalpa occurred. The present period, which falls under the second Parardha, is also known as Varaha Kalpa.

NATURAL AND FLAWED CREATIONS

Kraustuki asked curiously- 'Tell me how Brahma did his creations?'

Markandeya replied- 'When Brahma got up from his sleep after the end of dissolution (Pralaya) named Padram, he found a void all around himself. He remembered Narayana who is also known by the name of Nastanu i.e. one who dwells in water. Narayana was engrossed in his eternal sleep. After waking up, he rescued the earth, submerged in the ocean just like he had done in the previous Kalpas by taking the forms of a boar, a fish and tortoise etc. But even after the earth was brought up from the seabed and was established above the ocean, it was still swinging like a boat. Narayana then created the mountains to stop the earth from swinging. But the mountains were burnt down by Agni (fire) named Samvartak. The mountains submerged into the ocean. The mountains after having displaced the water had become fixed at their respective places. Therefore, Narayana divided the whole earth into seven islands and created the four lokas just like before. After that, five Avidyas came into being. This way, the whole creation established themselves in five ways. The whole creation was hidden in darkness till this period. After this, Narayana created the ignorant animals, which symbolised the Tamas guna. After the animals the deities who symbolised the Satva guna were created.'

'Brahma was extremely satisfied by the creations of Narayana. But he was desirous of creating even more superior creatures. As a result a group of Sadhakas named Arvaksrota came into being. These Sadhakas were humans who possessed Rajas guna. The fifth creation of Anugraha was itself sub-divided into four parts- Viparyaya, Siddhi, Shanti and Srishti. The sixth creation was of those special people who had the knowledge of past and present events. These people had wives, enjoyed life in a balanced way but were of evil nature. These people were known as Bhutadik.'

'The first creation was related with the manifestation of lord Brahma himself. This great creation was known as the Maha Srishti. The second creation related with the part of Brahma is called Bhutsarga. The third creation is called Prakrit and which consists of creatures possessing intelligence and flawed sensual perceptions. The fourth creation consists of the Sthawars who are unable to move (e.g. vegetation). The fifth creation consists of four-footed animals. The sixth creation consists of the deities whereas the seventh creation that of human beings which originates from Arvaksrota. The eighth creation is known as Anugraha. The ninth creation of Brahma is known as Prakrit (natural) and Vikari (flawed). These are the nine types of creation of Brahma. The root causes of this universe are Prakrit and Vikari.'

CREATION OF THE DEITIES

Kraustuki then asked Markandeya about the origin of the deities.
Markandeya replied- 'With the objective of creating the deities, demons,

ancestors and human beings, Brahma abandoned the part of his physical body in the ocean. The demons originated from the thighs of his abandoned body. Lord Brahma blessed the demons with physical bodies, which were Tamasik in nature. This part of Brahma's body became famous as Ratri (night). After that Brahma created the deities from his mouth with the help of Satva guna. The deities were given pure bodies. This part of Brahma's body which was Satvik (pure) in nature became famous as day.'

'After this, Brahma acquired another physical body and created the ancestors. After creating the ancestors, he abandoned his body, which transformed itself in the evening. Brahma then acquired another body, which was affluent of Rajas qualities and thus was created human being. He again abandoned his body and from it was created Jyotsna- the transition period of day and night.'

'Jyotsna, evening and day contain the quality of Satva in themselves. Night has the quality of Tamas in itself. The deities, demons and human beings are most powerful during the day, night and Jyotsna period respectively. The ancestors are most powerful and invincible during the evening time.'

'Brahma then created creatures who had moustaches and beard on their face. Some creatures among them started attacking the others. Those who were being attacked and pleaded 'save us' were called the Rakshasas (demons). The attackers who thundered 'we would devour you up' were known as Yakshas (celestial beings).

'Brahma was very displeased by their tantrums. Some of his hair fell down on earth and thus were created the snakes. The flesh-eating Ganas were next to be created. These Ganas were extremely volatile in nature. After that, Brahma created the Gandharvas.'

'This way after having created these eight types of divine creation, Brahma created all the animals and birds from his body. He created the goat from his mouth, lamb from his heart, cow from his stomach and back, animals like horse, elephant, donkey, rabbit, deer, camel and mule were created by Brahma from both his legs. Variety of vegetation and medicinal plants were created from the hair of his body.' 'Brahma then

created the following things from the first of his four mouths- Gayatri, Tri- rik, tri- vrit, Sam, Rathantar and Agnishtom. From his mouth facing south, he created Yajuh, Traishtumchhand, Panchadasha-stom, Vrihatsam and Uktha. From his mouth facing west, he created Sham, Jagatichhand, Panchadasha-stom, Vairoop and Atiratra. From his mouth facing north, he created twenty-one Atharva, Aptoryam, Anushtubha and Vairaj.'

'In the beginning of Kalpa, Brahma created the natural things like lightning, Vajra, cloud, rainbow and birds. After that he created the deities etc. He then created stable things like mountains, living creatures that could move, demons, birds, animals and snakes etc. All these living creatures take birth and rebirths, reap the fruits of the past Karmas done in their previous life. This is the way Brahma had done creation at the end of the dissolution period.'

CREATION OF THE DEITIES

Kraustuki then asked Markandeya about the origin of the deities. Markandeya replied- 'With the objective of creating the deities, demons, ancestors and human beings, Brahma abandoned the part of his physical body in the ocean. The demons originated from the thighs of his abandoned body. Lord Brahma blessed the demons with physical bodies, which were Tamasik in nature. This part of Brahma's body became famous as Ratri (night). After that Brahma created the deities from his mouth with the help of Satva guna. The deities were given pure bodies. This part of Brahma's body which was Satvik (pure) in nature became famous as day.'

'After this, Brahma acquired another physical body and created the ancestors. After creating the ancestors, he abandoned his body, which transformed itself in the evening. Brahma then acquired another body, which was affluent of Rajas qualities and thus was created human being. He again abandoned his body and from it was created Jyotsna- the transition period of day and night.'

'Jyotsna, evening and day contain the quality of Satva in themselves. Night has the quality of Tamas in itself. The deities, demons and human beings are most powerful during the day, night and Jyotsna period respectively. The ancestors are most powerful and invincible during the evening time.'

'Brahma then created creatures who had moustaches and beard on their face. Some creatures among them started attacking the others. Those who were being attacked and pleaded 'save us' were called the Rakshasas (demons). The attackers who thundered 'we would devour you up' were known as Yakshas (celestial beings).

'Brahma was very displeased by their tantrums. Some of his hair fell down on earth and thus were created the snakes. The flesh-eating Ganas were next to be created. These Ganas were extremely volatile in nature. After that, Brahma created the Gandharvas.'

'This way after having created these eight types of divine creation, Brahma created all the animals and birds from his body. He created the goat from his mouth, lamb from his heart, cow from his stomach and back, animals like horse, elephant, donkey, rabbit, deer, camel and mule were created by Brahma from both his legs. Variety of vegetation and medicinal plants were created from the hair of his body.' 'Brahma then created the following things from the first of his four mouths- Gayatri, Tri- rik, tri- vrit, Sam, Rathantar and Agnishtom. From his mouth facing south, he created Yajuh, Traishtumchhand, Panchadasha-stom, Vrihatsam and Uktha. From his mouth facing west, he created Sham, Jagatichhand, Panchadasha-stom, Vairoop and Atiratra. From his mouth facing north, he created twenty-one Atharva, Aptoryam, Anushtubha and Vairaj.'

'In the beginning of Kalpa, Brahma created the natural things like lightning, Vajra, cloud, rainbow and birds. After that he created the deities etc. He then created stable things like mountains, living creatures that could move, demons, birds, animals and snakes etc. All these living creatures take birth and rebirths, reap the fruits of the past Karmas done in their previous life. This is the way Brahma had done creation at the end of the dissolution period.'

COPULATIVE CREATIONS

Markandeya says- Brahma created one thousand couples from his mouth in the beginning of creation. These couples were radiant and possessed

virtuous qualities (Satvik). Once again, Brahma created one thousand couples from his chest but this time they possessed the quality of Rajas. This phenomenon was repeated for the second time and once again one thousand couples manifested themselves from his chest. These couples were both Rajas as well as Tamasik by nature. At last Brahma created one thousand more couples from both his legs. These couples were completely Tamasik by nature. The couples started copulating and this process has been continuing since then.' 'Brahma now became worried as to how to accommodate such a large number of people. Initially, these people used to roam about every where, as there were no permanent residences to accomodate them. At the arrival of Treta Yuga, they developed attachment and started living in houses. Subsequently they started living in various types of abodes- Pura, Village, Dronimukha, Shakhanagar, Kharvatak, Drami, Gram and Sanghosh etc.'

COPULATIVE CREATIONS

Markandeya says- Brahma created one thousand couples from his mouth in the beginning of creation. These couples were radiant and possessed virtuous qualities (Satvik). Once again, Brahma created one thousand couples from his chest but this time they possessed the quality of Rajas. This phenomenon was repeated for the second time and once again one thousand couples manifested themselves from his chest. These couples were both Rajas as well as Tamasik by nature. At last Brahma created one thousand more couples from both his legs. These couples were completely Tamasik by nature. The couples started copulating and this process has been continuing since then.' 'Brahma now became worried as to how to accommodate such a large number of people. Initially, these people used to roam about every where, as there were no permanent residences to accomodate them. At the arrival of Treta Yuga, they developed attachment and started living in houses. Subsequently they started living in various types of abodes- Pura, Village, Dronimukha, Shakhanagar, Kharvatak, Drami, Gram and Sanghosh etc.'

DAKSHA'S LINEAGE

Markandeya says- 'Brahma on seeing that inspite of all his creations the population was not increasing, he decided to create his Manasputras.

These Manasputras were created merely by his wish. Their names were Bhrigu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Angira, Marichi, Daksha, Atri and Vashishta. After this, he first created the ferocious Rudra and then Sankalpa and Dharma. But all these people were very virtuous, knowledgeable and unaffected by worldly desires. They showed their disinclination towards the purpose for which they have been created by Brahma i.e. increasing the population. Brahma became very furious in his anger and created an entity whose half portion resembled a man's body while the remaining half resembled that of a woman.

Brahma instructed that entity to bisect his body into two distinct forms of a man and a woman. The entity followed Brahma's instruction and this way Swayambhu Manu and Shatrupa came into being. Manu accepted Shatrupa as his wife. Two sons were bom to them- Priyavrata and Uttanpada. Apart from these two sons, two daughters were also born to them- Akuti and Prasuti. Prasuti was married to Daksha while Akuti was married to Ruchi. Twenty-four daughters were bom to Daksha and Prasuti out of which thirteen of them were married to Dharma. The remaining eleven daughters were married to sages like Bhrigu, Mahadeva, Marichi, Angira, Atri etc.'

Dharma fathered Kama from Shradha. Sri gave birth to Darpa, Dhriti and Niyama. Tushti gave birth to Santosh, Pushti to Lobha, Medha to Shrut, Kriya to Dand, Buddhi to Bodh, Lajja to Vinay, Vapra to Vyavasay, Shanti to Kshema, Siddhi to Sukh and Kirti gave birth to Yash. Kama, the son of Dharma was the father of Atihrishta.'

'Himsa- the wife of Adharma gave birth to Anrita. Anrita was married to Nirriti. Two sons named Narak and Bhaya and two daughters named Maya and Vedana were born to them.'

'Maya gave birth to Mrityu, whereas Dukha was born as a result of Narak's marriage with Vedana. Five children were bom to Mrityu- Vyadhi, Jara, Shoka, Trishna and Krodha. All of them were very irreligious by nature and they never got an opportunity get married and have progenies.'

'Mrityu's wife- Nirriti is also known by the name of Alakshmi. Altogether fourteen sons were bom to them. All these fourteen sons of Mrityu dwell

in the organs of human beings, during the time of destruction. Out of these fourteen sons, ten dwell in the sense organs of human beings and the eleventh son dwells in the mind. They influence the sense organs and the mind of a man in a negative way by means of attachment and anger. The twelfth son exists in the form of arrogance. The thirteenth son Apar adversely affects the intelligence of a man.

The fourteenth son- Duhsah resides in the house of males. Duhsah is naked, always hungry, his mouth facing downwards and caws like the crow.

DAKSHA'S LINEAGE

Markandeya says- 'Brahma on seeing that inspite of all his creations the population was not increasing, he decided to create his Manasputras. These Manasputras were created merely by his wish. Their names were Bhrigu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Angira, Marichi, Daksha, Atri and Vashishta. After this, he first created the ferocious Rudra and then Sankalpa and Dharma. But all these people were very virtuous, knowledgeable and unaffected by worldly desires. They showed their disinclination towards the purpose for which they have been created by Brahma i.e. increasing the population. Brahma became very furious in his anger and created an entity whose half portion resembled a man's body while the remaining half resembled that of a woman.

Brahma instructed that entity to bisect his body into two distinct forms of a man and a woman. The entity followed Brahma's instruction and this way Swayambhu Manu and Shatrupa came into being. Manu accepted Shatrupa as his wife. Two sons were born to them- Priyavrata and Uttanpada. Apart from these two sons, two daughters were also born to them- Akuti and Prasuti. Prasuti was married to Daksha while Akuti was married to Ruchi. Twenty-four daughters were born to Daksha and Prasuti out of which thirteen of them were married to Dharma. The remaining eleven daughters were married to sages like Bhrigu, Mahadeva, Marichi, Angira, Atri etc.'

'Dharma fathered Kama from Shradha. Sri gave birth to Darpa, Dhriti and Niyama. Tushti gave birth to Santosh, Pushti to Lobha, Medha to Shrut, Kriya to Dand, Buddhi to Bodh, Lajja to Vinay, Vapra to Vyavasay, Shanti to Kshema, Siddhi to Sukh and Kirti gave birth to Yash. Kama, the son of Dharma was the father of Atihrishta.'

'Himsa- the wife of Adharma gave birth to Anrita. Anrita was married to Nirriti. Two sons named Narak and Bhaya and two daughters named Maya and Vedana were born to them.'

'Maya gave birth to Mrityu, whereas Dukha was born as a result of Narak's marriage with Vedana. Five children were born to Mrityu- Vyadhi, Jara, Shoka, Trishna and Krodha. All of them were very irreligious by nature and they never got an opportunity get married and have progenies.'

'Mrityu's wife- Nirriti is also known by the name of Alakshmi. Altogether fourteen sons were born to them. All these fourteen sons of Mrityu dwell in the organs of human beings, during the time of destruction. Out of these fourteen sons, ten dwell in the sense organs of human beings and the eleventh son dwells in the mind. They influence the sense organs and the mind of a man in a negative way by means of attachment and anger. The twelfth son exists in the form of arrogance. The thirteenth son Apar adversely affects the intelligence of a man.

The fourteenth son- Duhsah resides in the house of males. Duhsah is naked, always hungry, his mouth facing downwards and caws like the crow.

DESCENDANTS OF DUHSAH

Markandeya says- 'Nirmashti, the wife of Duhsah was the daughter of Yama. Altogether sixteen children were born to Duhsah and Nirmashti.

Out of them eight were sons and the remaining eight were daughters. The name of the sons were- Dantakrishti, Tathokti, Parivarta, Angadhruka, Shakuni, Ganda, Pranrati, Garbhaha and Sasyaha while the names of the daughters were Niyojika, Virodhini, Swayamaharini, Bhramani, Rituharika, Smritihara, Beejhara and Vidveshini. Dantakrishti causes the teeth of the child to make a grinding sound. Tathokti is commonly used while men are conversing by saying, 'So be it' (Tathastu). Parivarta becomes happy by establishing an alien foetus in the womb of women. Angadhruka causes the organs of human beings to throb and enables him to express the emotions of joy and sorrow. Shakuni resides in the bodies of birds like crow and animals like dog or fox.'

'Ganda destroys all the virtues. Garbhaha destroys the foetus in the womb of a woman while Sasyaha destroys all kinds of wealth.'

'Among the daughters, Niyojika encourages a man to have illicit relationship and also to steal the wealth of others. Virodhini causes differences between husband and wife and also among the family members. Swayamaharini destroys the prosperity of a man. Bhramani causes restlessness and anger in the heart of a man living at one place for a long time. Rituharika destroys the menstrual cycle of women. Smritiharika causes loss of memory. Beejhara destroys the sexual powers of a man and woman. Dweshini causes jealousy in the heart of a man and woman. Altogether 38 children were bom to all the 16 children of Duhsah and Nirmashti. All of them were wicked and caused miseries to people.'

DESCENDANTS OF DUHSAH

Markandeya says- 'Nirmashti, the wife of Duhsah was the daughter of Yama. Altogether sixteen children were born to Duhsah and Nirmashti. Out of them eight were sons and the remaining eight were daughters. The name of the sons were- Dantakrishti, Tathokti, Parivarta, Angadhruka, Shakuni, Ganda, Pranrati, Garbhaha and Sasyaha while the names of the daughters were Niyojika, Virodhini, Swayamaharini, Bhramani, Rituharika, Smritihara, Beejhara and Vidveshini. Dantakrishti causes the teeth of the child to make a grinding sound. Tathokti is commonly used while men are conversing by saying, 'So be it' (Tathastu). Parivarta becomes happy by establishing an alien foetus in the womb of women. Angadhruka causes the organs of human beings to throb and enables him to express the emotions of joy and sorrow. Shakuni resides in the bodies of birds like crow and animals like dog or fox.'

'Ganda destroys all the virtues. Garbhaha destroys the foetus in the womb of a woman while Sasyaha destroys all kinds of wealth.'

'Among the daughters, Niyojika encourages a man to have illicit relationship and also to steal the wealth of others. Virodhini causes differences between husband and wife and also among the family members. Swayamaharini destroys the prosperity of a man. Bhramani causes restlessness and anger in the heart of a man living at one place for a long time. Rituharika destroys the menstrual cycle of women. Smritiharika causes loss of memory. Beejhara destroys the sexual powers of a man and woman. Dweshini causes jealousy in the heart of a man and woman. Altogether 38 children were born to all the 16 children of Duhsah and Nirmashti. All of them were wicked and caused miseries to people.'

THE CREATION OF RUDRAS

Markandeya says- 'Now I am going to tell you about Rudrasarga. One of the eight sons of Brahma started wailing after being created from his

(Brahma) body. Brahma asked him as to why he was crying. The crying child requested Brahma to give him a name. Brahma named him as Rudra since he was wailing at the time of his birth. But even after getting his name, the child's wailing did not stop. He wailed for seven times and as a result seven more children were manifested from his cries. Brahma named these seven children as Bhava, Sharva, Ishan, Pashupati, Bheem, Ugra and Mahadeva. He also gave them abodes so that they could live. The following eight things respectively symbolize the forms of all these eight rudras- Sun, water, earth, fire, air, sky, Dikshit Brahmin and Soma. All these eight rudras were also given their respective wives who were Suvarchala, Uma, Vikeshi, Swadha, Swaha, Dik, Diksha and Rohini.'

'The eight sons of all the eight rudras are Shanaishwar, Shukra, Lohitang, Manojav, Skand, Sarg, Santan and Buddh respectively.'

'Rudra had accepted Sati as his wife. Sati gave up her life because her father Daksha had shown disrespect to her husband- Rudra. Sati took her second birth as Parvati, the daughter of Himavan. Mainak was her brother. Bhava married Parvati. Khyati was Bhrigu's wife. They had two children- Dhata and Vidhata. Lakshmi was the consort of Narayana. Meru had two daughters-Ayati and Niyati. Both of them were married to Dhata and Vidhata respectively. Each one of them had two sons. Ayati had named her son as Pran while Niyati named her son as Mrikandu. The same Mrikandu is my (Markandeya) father. My mother's name is Manaswini and my son's name is Vedashira.'

'Sambhuti- the wife of Marichi gave birth to Paurnmas. Smriti- the wife of Marichi gave birth to four daughters- Siniwali, Kuhu, Raka and Anumati.' 'Ansuya, the wife of sage Atri gave birth to three sons- Soma, Durvasa and Dattatreya. Dutt and Dambholi were born to Preeti, the wife of Pulastya. He became famous as Agastya during the time of Swayambhuva Manavantar.'

'Three sons- Kardam, Arvaveera and Sahishnu were bom to Kshama, the wife of Pulaha. Sannati, the wife of Ritu gave birth to 60,000 Balkhilyaganas. Urja- the wife of Vashishta gave birth to seven sons- Raja, Gatra, Urdhwabahu, Sabal, Anagh, Sutapa and Shukra. These seven are famous as the Saptarishis.'

'Agni was married to Swaha. Three sons were born to them- Pavak, Pavamana and Shuchi.'

THE CREATION OF RUDRAS

Markandeya says- 'Now I am going to tell you about Rudrasarga. One of the eight sons of Brahma started wailing after being created from his (Brahma) body. Brahma asked him as to why he was crying. The crying child requested Brahma to give him a name. Brahma named him as Rudra since he was wailing at the time of his birth. But even after getting his name, the child's wailing did not stop. He wailed for seven times and as a result seven more children were manifested from his cries. Brahma named these seven children as Bhava, Sharva, Ishan, Pashupati, Bheem, Ugra and Mahadeva. He also gave them abodes so that they could live. The following eight things respectively symbolize the forms of all these eight rudras- Sun, water, earth, fire, air, sky, Dikshit Brahmin and Soma. All these eight rudras were also given their respective wives who were Suvarchala, Uma, Vikeshi, Swadha, Swaha, Dik, Diksha and Rohini.'

'The eight sons of all the eight rudras are Shanaishwar, Shukra, Lohitang, Manojav, Skand, Sarg, Santan and Buddh respectively.'

'Rudra had accepted Sati as his wife. Sati gave up her life because her father Daksha had shown disrespect to her husband- Rudra. Sati took her second birth as Parvati, the daughter of Himavan. Mainak was her brother. Bhava married Parvati. Khyati was Bhrigu's wife. They had two children- Dhata and Vidhata. Lakshmi was the consort of Narayana. Meru had two daughters- Ayati and Niyati. Both of them were married to Dhata and Vidhata respectively. Each one of them had two sons. Ayati had named her son as Pran while Niyati named her son as Mrikandu. The same Mrikandu is my (Markandeya) father. My mother's name is Manaswini and my son's name is Vedashira.'

'Sambhuti- the wife of Marichi gave birth to Paurnmas. Smriti- the wife of Marichi gave birth to four daughters- Siniwali, Kuhu, Raka and Anumati.' 'Ansuya, the wife of sage Atri gave birth to three sons- Soma, Durvasa and Dattatreya. Dutt and Dambholi were born to Preeti, the wife of Pulastya. He became famous as Agastya during the time of Swayambhuva Manavantar.'

'Three sons- Kardam, Arvaveera and Sahishnu were born to Kshama, the wife of Pulaha. Sannati, the wife of Ritu gave birth to 60,000 Balkhilyaganas. Urja- the wife of Vashishta gave birth to seven sons- Raja, Gatra, Urdhwabahu, Sabal, Anagh, Sutapa and Shukra. These seven are famous as the Saptarishis.'

'Agni was married to Swaha. Three sons were born to them- Pavak, Pavamana and Shuchi.'

THE VARIOUS MANVANTARS

SWAYAMBHUVA MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'Swayambhuva Manu had ten sons. He had divided the whole earth into seven continents. In the beginning of Treta Yuga, the sons of Priyavrata had done the same. Prajavati-the daughter of Kardam Prajapati had ten sons and two daughters from Priyavrata. Names of these ten sons were- Agnighna, Medhatithi, Vayushman, Jyotishman, Dyutiman, Bhatya, Savan, Medha, Agnibahu and Mitra. Among all these ten sons, the last three never ruled any kingdom.

The remaining seven sons were made the rulers of all the seven continents by Priyavrata. Agnighna was made the ruler of Jambudweep, Medhatithi that of Plakshdweep. Vayushman was given Shalmalidweep whereas Jyotishman was made the ruler of Kushdweep. Similarly, Dyutiman was given Kraunchdweep to rule while Bhatya was given Shakdweep. The seventh son, Savan was made the ruler of Pushkardweep. Savan had two sons- Medhavi and Dhataki. Savan sub-divided the Pushkardweep into two parts and each part was given to each of the sons. Bhatya had seven sons- Jalad, Kumar, Sukumar, Marnavak, Kushottar, Medhavi and Mahadrum. Bhatya too sub-divided the Shakdweep into seven parts and distributed them among all his sons. Similarly, Dyutiman too had seven sons to whom were distributed his kingdom Kraunchdweep after sub-dividing it into seven parts. Jyotishman, Vayushman and Medhatithi made their respective sons the rulers after giving them kingdoms. Agnighna was the ruler of Jambudweep. He had nine sons. His kingdom was equally distributed among all of them. Nabhi- the son of Agnighna was the father of Rishabh. Bharata was the son of Rishabh. Bharata was given the southern part of Rishabh's kingdom. Our country is named after Bharata.'

SWAYAMBHUVA MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'Swayambhuva Manu had ten sons. He had divided the whole earth into seven continents. In the beginning of Treta Yuga, the sons of Priyavrata had done the same. Prajavati- the daughter of Kardam Prajapati had ten sons and two daughters from Priyavrata. Names of these ten sons were- Agnighna, Medhatithi, Vayushman, Jyotishman, Dyutiman, Bhatya, Savan, Medha, Agnibahu and Mitra. Among all these ten sons, the last three never ruled any kingdom.

The remaining seven sons were made the rulers of all the seven continents by Priyavrata. Agnighna was made the ruler of Jambudweep, Medhatithi that of Plakshdweep. Vayushman was given Shalmalidweep whereas Jyotishman was made the ruler of Kushdweep. Similarly, Dyutiman was given Kraunchdweep to rule while Bhatya was given Shakdweep. The seventh son, Savan was made the ruler of Pushkardweep. Savan had two sons- Medhavi and Dhataki. Savan sub-divided the Pushkardweep into two parts and each part was given to each of the sons. Bhatya had seven sons- Jalad, Kumar, Sukumar, Marnavak, Kushottar, Medhavi and Mahadrum. Bhatya too sub-divided the Shakdweep into seven parts and distributed them among all his sons. Similarly, Dyutiman too had seven sons to whom were distributed his kingdom Kraunchdweep after sub-dividing it into seven parts. Jyotishman, Vayushman and Medhatithi made their respective sons the rulers after giving them kingdoms. Agnighna was the ruler of Jambudweep. He had nine sons. His kingdom was equally distributed among all of them. Nabhi- the son of Agnighna was the father of Rishabh. Bharata was the son of Rishabh. Bharata was given the southern part of Rishabh's kingdom. Our country is named after Bharata.'

JAMBUDWEEP

Markandeya says that the total area of Jambudweep comprises of one lakh Yojan while the area of Plakshdweep is twice the area of

Jambudweep i.e. two lakh Yojans. Similarly, Shalmali is twice the area of Plaksh while Kusha is twice the area of Shalmali. The area of Kraunchdweep is twice the area of Kushdweep whereas the area of Shakdweep is twice the area of Kraunchdweep.

The island of Pushkar is twice the area of Shak. Seven mountains are situated in all these seven islands. They are Himavan, Hemkut, Rishabh, Meru, Neel, Shwet and Sringi. Ilavrit is situated in the middle of six mountains, which themselves are situated in the middle of the ocean surrounding all the seven islands named earlier. Sumeru Mountain is situated in the central part of Ilavrit. People belonging to all the four castes- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra reside in Ilavrit.

Just above Ilavrit are the dwelling places of Lokpals like Indra etc. Lord Brahma's assembly is situated at the center. Beneath Ilavrit are situated the four mountains- Mandar, Gandhmadan, Vipul and Suparshva. These four mountains are situated in each of the four directions. The Great Mountain Nishadh is situated towards the west of Meru, while the Great Mountain Pariyatra is situated just behind it. Towards the south of Meru are situated the great mountains, Kailash and Himavan. The mountains Sringvan and Jarudhi are situated towards the north of Meru Mountain. River Jambu flows all around the Meru Mountain in a circular path.

JAMBUDWEEP

Markandeya says that the total area of Jambudweep comprises of one lakh Yojan while the area of Plakshdweep is twice the area of Jambudweep i.e. two lakh Yojans. Similarly, Shalmali is twice the area of Plaksh while Kusha is twice the area of Shalmali. The area of Kraunchdweep is twice the area of Kushdweep whereas the area of Shakdweep is twice the area of Kraunchdweep.

The island of Pushkar is twice the area of Shak. Seven mountains are situated in all these seven islands. They are Himavan, Hemkut, Rishabh, Meru, Neel, Shwet and Sringi. Ilavrit is situated in the middle of six mountains, which themselves are situated in the middle of the ocean surrounding all the seven islands named earlier. Sumeru Mountain is situated in the central part of Ilavrit. People belonging to all the four castes- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra reside in Ilavrit.

Just above Ilavrit are the dwelling places of Lokpals like Indra etc. Lord Brahma's assembly is situated at the center. Beneath Ilavrit are situated the four mountains- Mandar, Gandhmadan, Vipul and Suparshva. These four mountains are situated in each of the four directions. The Great Mountain Nishadh is situated towards the west of Meru, while the Great Mountain Pariyatra is situated just behind it. Towards the south of Meru are situated the great mountains, Kailash and Himavan. The mountains Sringvan and Jarudhi are situated towards the north of Meru Mountain. River Jambu flows all around the Meru Mountain in a circular path.

THE ORIGIN OF GANGA

Markandeya says- 'River Ganga originates from a place named Dhruvadhar. This particular place is related with Narayana. River Ganga,

then falls on the Sumeru Mountain and gets distributed into four main streams. One of these streams flows towards Chaitrartha forest. The name of this particular stream is Sita. The same Sita Ganga enters into the Varunaoda reservoir and from there, it moves towards the ocean and again changes its course to get submerge into that stream of Ganga, which has fallen on the Gandhmadan Mountain and which is known as Alaknanda. Alaknanda after submerging into Mansarovar subsequently entered the Mahadri Himalaya where Lord Shankar held her in His locks of hair. He released river Ganga only at the request of sage Bhagirath.

After being released, river Ganga got subdivided into seven streams and ultimately, all those seven streams submerged into the ocean. The stream of Ganga which originates from the west of Sumeru Mountain is known as Suchakshu. This stream gets submerged in the ocean towards the south, after passing through many mountains. The fourth stream reaches Savita forest after passing through two mountains- Suparshu and Meru. This particular stream is famously known as Bhadrasoma. Bhadrasoma Ganga ultimately get submerged into the ocean after passing through mountains like Shankhkoot and Vrishabh.

THE ORIGIN OF GANGA

Markandeya says- 'River Ganga originates from a place named Dhruvadhar. This particular place is related with Narayana. River Ganga, then falls on the Sumeru Mountain and gets distributed into four main streams. One of these streams flows towards Chaitrartha forest. The name of this particular stream is Sita. The same Sita Ganga enters into the Varunaoda reservoir and from there, it moves towards the ocean and again changes its course to get submerge into that stream of Ganga, which has fallen on the Gandhmadan Mountain and which is known as Alaknanda. Alaknanda after submerging into Mansarovar subsequently entered the Mahadri Himalaya where Lord Shankar held her in His locks of hair. He released river Ganga only at the request of sage Bhagirath.

After being released, river Ganga got subdivided into seven streams and ultimately, all those seven streams submerged into the ocean. The stream of Ganga which originates from the west of Sumeru Mountain is known as Suchakshu. This stream gets submerged in the ocean towards the south, after passing through many mountains. The fourth stream reaches Savita forest after passing through two mountains- Suparshu and Meru. This particular stream is famously known as Bhadrasoma. Bhadrasoma Ganga ultimately get submerged into the ocean after passing through mountains like Shankhkoot and Vrishabh.

BHARATAVARSHA

Kraustuki asked Markandeya- 'O lord! Please describe about Bharatavarsha.' Markandeya replied- 'Bharatavarsha is surrounded by

oceans on all its three sides. People living towards the east of Bharatavarsha are known as Kirat while people living towards the west are called Yavan. The central part of Bharatavarsha is inhabited by all the four castes- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The seven mountains are situated in the central part of Bharatavarsha. They are Mahendra, Malaya, Sahaya, Shaktiman, Riksh, Vindhya and Pariyatra. There are thousands of hills situated in the vicinity of these seven mountains. The central part of Bharatavarsha is sub-divided into Janpadas. The residents of these Janpadas are known as Mlechha and Arya. All the major rivers of Bharatavarsha like Ganga, Saraswati, Sindhu, Chandrabhaga, Yamuna, Shatadru, Vitasta, Irawati, Gomti, Vipasha and Gandki etc. originate from the mountains situated in the central parts. The names of the prominent Janpadas situated in the central part of Bharatavarsha are Matsya, Ashwakoot, Kulya, Kuntal, Kashi, Koshal, Arbuda, Kalinga, Malak, Vrik etc. River Godavari flows towards the north of Sahya Mountain.

A city named Govardhan is situated near this mountain. Some other prominent places situated in the vicinity of this mountain are Bahalik, Vataghan, Amir and Kaltoyak. Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras live in the following states- Shudra, Pahalav, Charmakhandika, Gandhar, Yavan, Sindhu, Sauveer, Bhadrak, Shatadruj, Parad and Kekaya. The following states are situated in the north of Bharatavarsha- Tamas, Hansmarg, Kashmir, Shulik, Kuhak, Uma, Darva etc. States like Abhrarak, Mudgarak, Antagiri, Plawang, Mai, Damal, Vartik, Uttarbrahma, Pragjyotish, Madra, Videha, Tamraliptak, Malla and Magadh are situated in the east of Bharatavarsha. States situated in the south of Bharatavarsha are Pandya, Kerala, Chola, Maharashtra, Mahishik, Kalinga and Amir. These are the Janpadas where Shabar live.'

'Janpadas situated in the west of Bharatavarsha are Suryarak, Kalibala, Durg, Kaha, Pulind, Toshal and Koshal etc. Bharatavarsha is the only country in the whole world where all the four yugas- Satya, Treta, Dwapar, and Kali occur in a cyclic way. Bharatavarsha is the root of all forms of divinity where deities reside and almighty God takes incarnation.'

BHARATAVARSHA

Kraustuki asked Markandeya- 'O lord! Please describe about Bharatavarsha.' Markandeya replied- 'Bharatavarsha is surrounded by oceans on all its three sides. People living towards the east of Bharatavarsha are known as Kirat while people living towards the west are called Yavan. The central part of Bharatavarsha is inhabited by all the four castes- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The seven mountains are situated in the central part of Bharatavarsha. They are Mahendra, Malaya, Sahaya, Shaktiman, Riksh, Vindhya and Pariyatra. There are thousands of hills situated in the vicinity of these seven mountains. The central part of Bharatavarsha is sub-divided into Janpadas. The residents of these Janpadas are known as Mlechha and Arya. All the major rivers of Bharatavarsha like Ganga, Saraswati, Sindhu, Chandrabhaga, Yamuna, Shatadru, Vitasta, Irawati, Gomti, Vipasha and Gandki etc. originate from the mountains situated in the central parts. The names of the prominent Janpadas situated in the central part of Bharatavarsha are Matsya, Ashwakoot, Kulya, Kuntal, Kashi, Koshal, Arbuda, Kalinga, Malak, Vrik etc. River Godavari flows towards the north of Sahya Mountain.

A city named Govardhan is situated near this mountain. Some other prominent places situated in the vicinity of this mountain are Bahalik, Vataghan, Amir and Kaltoyak. Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras live in the following states- Shudra, Pahalav, Charmakhandika, Gandhar, Yavan, Sindhu, Sauveer, Bhadrak, Shatadruj, Parad and Kekaya. The following states are situated in the north of Bharatavarsha- Tamas, Hansmarg, Kashmir, Shulik, Kuhak, Urna, Darva etc. States like Abhrarak, Mudgarak, Antagiri, Plawang, Mal, Damal, Vartik, Uttarbrahma, Pragjyotish, Madra, Videha, Tamraliptak, Malla and Magadh are situated in the east of Bharatavarsha. States situated in the south of Bharatavarsha are Pandya, Kerala, Chola, Maharashtra, Mahishik, Kalinga and Amir. These are the Janpadas where Shabar live.'

'Janpadas situated in the west of Bharatavarsha are Suryarak, Kalibala, Durg, Kaha, Pulind, Toshal and Koshal etc. Bharatavarsha is the only country in the whole world where all the four yugas- Satya, Treta, Dwapar, and Kali occur in a cyclic way. Bharatavarsha is the root of all forms of divinity where deities reside and almighty God takes incarnation.'

TORTOISE INCARNATION

Kraustuki asked Markandeya- 'O lord! How does Sri Hari live in the form of a tortoise?'

Markandeya replied- 'Sri Hari in the form of a tortoise sits facing east. States situated in the central portion of his body are Vedi, Madra, Mandavya, Shalva, Khasa, Saraswat, Matsya etc. States which are situated in the mouth of the tortoise are Vrishadhwaj, Anjan, Kasha, Magadh, Pragjyotish, Mithila, Koshal etc. In the right foot of the tortoise are situated states like Kalinga, Banga etc. Vindhya Mountain is also situated in the right foot. States which are situated in the tail of the tortoise are Manimegha, Kshuradri, Khanj, Konkan, Panchmad, Vamana, Sharkar, Chulik, Ashwakesha etc. Mandakya, Chandarwar, Ashwa, Kaland, Ghor, Ghuratwadi are the states that are situated in the left foot of the tortoise. Janpadas like Kailash, Himalaya, Kraunch, Kaikaya, Takshashila, Gandhar, Kharas, Yaudheya and Rajanya etc. are situated in the left side of the tortoise's abdomen.'

Narayana in the form of tortoise is that inconceivable soul in which reside all the lords of deities and constellations.

TORTOISE INCARNATION

Kraustuki asked Markandeya- 'O lord! How does Sri Hari live in the form of a tortoise?'

Markandeya replied- 'Sri Hari in the form of a tortoise sits facing east. States situated in the central portion of his body are Vedi, Madra, Mandavya, Shalva, Khasa, Saraswat, Matsya etc. States which are situated in the mouth of the tortoise are Vrishadhwaj, Anjan, Kasha, Magadh, Pragjyotish, Mithila, Koshal etc. In the right foot of the tortoise are situated states like Kalinga, Banga etc. Vindhya Mountain is also situated in the right foot. States which are situated in the tail of the tortoise are Manimegha, Kshuradri, Khanj, Konkan, Panchmad, Vamana, Sharkar, Chulik, Ashwakesha etc. Mandakya, Chandarwar, Ashwa, Kaland, Ghor, Ghuratwadi are the states that are situated in the left foot of the tortoise. Janpadas like Kailash, Himalaya, Kraunch, Kaikaya, Takshashila, Gandhar, Kharas, Yaudheya and Rajanya etc. are situated in the left side of the tortoise's abdomen.'

Narayana in the form of tortoise is that inconceivable soul in which reside all the lords of deities and constellations.

BHADRASHVA VARSHA

Markandeya says- 'Bhadrashva Varsh is situated towards the east of the great mountain Devakut. Five more mountains are situated within its

area- Kauranj, Shwetapama, Neela, Shaiwal and Pamashalagra. Bhadrashva consists of thousands of Janpadas. Numerous rivers like Sita, Shankhavali, Bhadra and Chakravarta flows there. People living in Bhadrashva Varsh are full of radiance and they live for 1000 years. Narayana dwells in Bhadrashva in his incarnation of Hayagreev.'

'Now I am going to tell about Ketumal Varsh which has seven mountains within its area- Vishal, Kambal, Krishna, Jayant, Hariparvat, Vishoka, and Vardhaman. There are thousands of smaller hills apart from these seven major mountains where people live. The names of the rivers flowing at Ketumal Varsh are Vankshuyama, Swakambha, Amogha, Kamini, Shyama etc. Narayana dwells in Ketumal Varsh in his incarnation of a boar (Varaha).'

'Now listen about Uttarkurudesha. There are thousands of trees, which are fruit laden in all the seasons. Apparels are made from the bark of the trees and ornaments from its fruits. After being degraded, the residents of Devaloka take birth here. Uttarkuru has two mountains- Chandrakant and Suryakant. The river- Bhadrasoma flows between these two mountains. Narayana in his incarnation of Matsya (fish) lives at Uttarkuru. Chandradweep and Bhadradweep are the two famous islands situated at Uttarkuru.'

BHADRASHVA VARSHA

Markandeya says- 'Bhadrashva Varsh is situated towards the east of the great mountain Devakut. Five more mountains are situated within its area- Kauranj, Shwetaparna, Neela, Shaiwal and Parnashalagra. Bhadrashva consists of thousands of Janpadas. Numerous rivers like Sita, Shankhavali, Bhadra and Chakravarta flows there. People living in Bhadrashva Varsh are full of radiance and they live for 1000 years. Narayana dwells in Bhadrashva in his incarnation of Hayagreev.'

'Now I am going to tell about Ketumal Varsh which has seven mountains within its area- Vishal, Kambal, Krishna, Jayant, Hariparvat, Vishoka, and Vardhaman. There are thousands of smaller hills apart from these seven major mountains where people live. The names of the rivers flowing at Ketumal Varsh are Vankshuyama, Swakambha, Amogha, Kamini, Shyama etc. Narayana dwells in Ketumal Varsh in his incarnation of a boar (Varaha).'

'Now listen about Uttarkurudesha. There are thousands of trees, which are fruit laden in all the seasons. Apparels are made from the bark of the trees and ornaments from its fruits. After being degraded, the residents of Devaloka take birth here. Uttarkuru has two mountains- Chandrakant and Suryakant. The river- Bhadrasoma flows between these two mountains. Narayana in his incarnation of Matsya (fish) lives at Uttarkuru. Chandradweep and Bhadradweep are the two famous islands situated at Uttarkuru.'

KIMPURUSHA VARSHA

Markandeya says- The people residing in KimPurusha Varsh enjoy a long life. They live for 10,000 years. They are never bothered by any kind of

disease or sorrow. Just behind Kimpurusha Varsh is situated Hari Varsh. The residents of Hari Varsh enjoy an eternally youthful life because of the sugarcane juice they intake. Meru Varsh, which is situated near Hari Varsh, is also known as Ilavrit. It is devoid of the light of the Sun but gets sufficient light from the radiant Sumeru Mountain. It is so bright that even the Sun gets overshadowed. People living in Meru Varsh enjoy a very long life for 30,000 years. Similarly people living in Ramyak Varsh sustain themselves by drinking fruit juice. They live for 10,000 years. Hiranyamay Varsh is situated towards the north of Ramyak Varsh where the river Hiranvati flows. The residents of Hiranyamay are powerful, rich and handsome in appearance.

KIMPURUSHA VARSHA

Markandeya says- 'The people residing in KimPurusha Varsh enjoy a long life. They live for 10,000 years. They are never bothered by any kind of disease or sorrow. Just behind Kimpurusha Varsh is situated Hari Varsh. The residents of Hari Varsh enjoy an eternally youthful life because of the sugarcane juice they intake. Meru Varsh, which is situated near Hari Varsh, is also known as Ilavrit. It is devoid of the light of the Sun but gets sufficient light from the radiant Sumeru Mountain. It is so bright that even the Sun gets overshadowed. People living in Meru Varsh enjoy a very long life for 30,000 years. Similarly people living in Ramyak Varsh sustain themselves by drinking fruit juice. They live for 10,000 years. Hiranyamay Varsh is situated towards the north of Ramyak Varsh where the river Hiranvati flows. The residents of Hiranyamay are powerful, rich and handsome in appearance.

SWAROCHISH MANVANTAR

Kraustuki asked Markandeya- 'O great sage! Now tell me something about Swarochish Manavantar?'

Markandeya replied- 'Once upon a time, there lived a Brahmin at the bank of river Varuna. One day, a guest arrived at his place. The Brahmin treated his guest with due respect. After formal introduction, the Brahmin became aware that his guest was not an ordinary person. He had travelled around the world with the help of some special mantras he knew and medicinal herbs, which he had in his possession. The Brahmin was quite impressed. He too wanted to see the whole earth. He requested his guest to give the mantra and the medicinal herb so that he could travel around the world just like him. The guest applied some medicinal solution on his legs. After this the Brahmin went to see the Himalaya Mountain. While wandering there, the solution, which had been applied on his legs, got washed away. As a result, he now became immobile. He started looking all around himself. He found numerous Apsaras entertaining the Kinnars, Gandharvas and deities. The Brahmin was very much pleased to see the happy atmosphere prevailing all around Himalaya. He thought of going back to his place but was unsuccessful, as the medicinal solution had been washed. He became very sad. An Apsara by the name of Varudhini saw him in a miserable condition. She became infatuated by him. When she went near him, he asked- 'Who are you? Who is your husband? What are you doing here?'

After this, he narrated his own story and said- 'I had come from Aruna nagar to see the Himalaya. But I am unable to return home as the medicinal solution, which was applied on my legs has been washed. Varudhini told the Brahmin that she was an Apsara. She also expressed her deep love towards the Brahmin. She requested the Brahmin to stay there and not to go back home. She assured him if he did, as per her instructions then he would enjoy an eternal youth. He would never become old. Varudhini forcibly tried to embrace the Brahmin. This made the Brahmin very angry.

He said- 'Varudhini! The sacred scriptures prohibit a Brahmin from indulging in sensual pleasures because it gives sorrow not only in this world but also after his death.' But Varudhini was not satisfied by his answers. She threatened to give up her life if the Brahmin did not marry her. The Brahmin did not agree. The Brahmin purified himself by performing Achaman and began worshipping Agni. He said- 'O Agni! You are the root cause of all Karmas. The deities bless us with rain only after you are pleased. O Agni! I need your blessings. I want to go back home.'

SWAROCHISH MANVANTAR

Kraustuki asked Markandeya- 'O great sage! Now tell me something about Swarochish Manavantar?'

Markandeya replied- 'Once upon a time, there lived a Brahmin at the bank of river Varuna. One day, a guest arrived at his place. The Brahmin treated his guest with due respect. After formal introduction, the Brahmin became aware that his guest was not an ordinary person. He had travelled around the world with the help of some special mantras he knew and medicinal herbs, which he had in his possession. The Brahmin was quite impressed. He too wanted to see the whole earth. He requested his guest to give the mantra and the medicinal herb so that he could travel around the world just like him. The guest applied some medicinal solution on his legs. After this the Brahmin went to see the Himalaya Mountain. While wandering there, the solution, which had been applied on his legs, got washed away. As a result, he now became immobile. He started looking all around himself. He found numerous Apsaras entertaining the Kinnars, Gandharvas and deities. The Brahmin was very much pleased to see the happy atmosphere prevailing all around Himalaya. He thought of going back to his place but was unsuccessful, as the medicinal solution had been washed. He became very sad. An Apsara by the name of Varudhini saw him in a miserable condition. She became infatuated by him. When she went near him, he asked- 'Who are you? Who is your husband? What are you doing here?'

After this, he narrated his own story and said- 'I had come from Aruna nagar to see the Himalaya. But I am unable to return home as the medicinal solution, which was applied on my legs has been washed. Varudhini told the Brahmin that she was an Apsara. She also expressed her deep love towards the Brahmin. She requested the Brahmin to stay there and not to go back home. She assured him if he did, as per her instructions then he would enjoy an eternal youth. He would never become old. Varudhini forcibly tried to embrace the Brahmin. This made the Brahmin very angry.

He said- 'Varudhini! The sacred scriptures prohibit a Brahmin from indulging in sensual pleasures because it gives sorrow not only in this world but also after his death.' But Varudhini was not satisfied by his answers. She threatened to give up her life if the Brahmin did not marry her. The Brahmin did not agree. The Brahmin purified himself by performing Achaman and began worshipping Agni. He said- 'O Agni! You are the root cause of all Karmas. The deities bless us with rain only after you are pleased. O Agni! I need your blessings. I want to go back home.'

VARUDHINI'S MODESTY BREACHED

Markandeya says- 'Agni became pleased by the Brahmin's devotion. Agni entered into his body. The Brahmin's body illuminated due to Agni's

radiance. When Varudhini saw this, she was fascinated by the Brahmin's appearance. The Brahmin proceeded towards his home. Feeling helpless, Varudhini cursed her fate.'

Varudhini had once insulted a Gandharva named Kali sometime in the past. Chancing upon the opportunity, Kali went to Varudhini take his revenge. He had disguised himself as a Brahmin. When she saw him, she said- 'I need your protection if you heed to my request then you will certainly attain virtuosity. Kali did not want her to know about his real identity, so he replied- 'If you really want my protection, then you must have your eyes closed while having copulation.' Varudhini agreed.

VARUDHINI'S MODESTY BREACHED

Markandeya says- 'Agni became pleased by the Brahmin's devotion. Agni entered into his body. The Brahmin's body illuminated due to Agni's radiance. When Varudhini saw this, she was fascinated by the Brahmin's appearance. The Brahmin proceeded towards his home. Feeling helpless, Varudhini cursed her fate.'

Varudhini had once insulted a Gandharva named Kali sometime in the past. Chancing upon the opportunity, Kali went to Varudhini take his revenge. He had disguised himself as a Brahmin. When she saw him, she said- 'I need your protection if you heed to my request then you will certainly attain virtuosity. Kali did not want her to know about his real identity, so he replied- 'If you really want my protection, then you must have your eyes closed while having copulation.' Varudhini agreed.

HIS MARRIAGE WITYH MANORAMA

In due course of time, Varudhini became pregnant. She gave birth to a child who was named Swarochi. The child was extra-ordinary. In a very

short time, he became proficient in all the scriptures. One day, young Swarochi saw a terrified girl near the Mandar Mountain. When the girl saw Swarochi, she pleaded for help. Swarochi assured her and asked about her identity. She said- 'My name is Manorama. Once I had made fun of a sage who was doing penance near the Kailash Mountain. At that time, two of my companions- Vibhavari and Kalavati were also present with me. The sage cursed all three of us. Vibhavari and Kalavati got inflicted with leprosy and tuberculosis due to his curse. Even I was not spared. I am being chased by a ferocious demon since then. I need your protection from that demon. I am giving you this very powerful weapon with which you can successfully kill the demon.'

Swarochi took the weapon. During the conversation between Swarochi and Manorama, a demon arrived just then. The demon wanted to devour Manorama. Swarochi was confused, as he did not want the sage's curse to go futile. He allowed the demon to get hold of Manorama, who then started wailing. Hearing her wail, Swarochi thought of killing the demon. Becoming afraid, the demon released Manorama from his clutches and pleaded Swarochi to spare his life. He then narrated his own story. He said- 'You have rescued me from sage Brahmamitra's curse. Actually, my name is Indivaraksha. I had requested Brahmamitra to teach him the nuances of Ayurveda, which he refused. I decided to leam Ayurveda while sage Brahmamitra taught his disciples by hiding myself. One day, the sage came to know of this. He cursed me to become a demon. I begged for his forgiveness. He said- 'Whatever I have said will definitely come true. You will certainly become a demon. After becoming a demon, you will try to devour your own daughter but would regain your original form of Gandharva due to the touch of Astranal weapon with which you would be attacked. O great soul! Since you have liberated me from the curse, therefore, I hand over this girl to you. Accept her as your wife. I will also bestow the knowledge of Ayurveda, which I had learnt from sage Brahmamitra.'

Manorama requested Swarochi to cure her companions from the diseases they were suffering from. Swarochi assured Manorama that he would certainly cure her companions with the help of Ayurveda, which the demon had taught him. Both Swarochi and Manorama got married. Swarochi then went to her companions and cured them from their diseases.

HIS MARRIAGE WITYH MANORAMA

In due course of time, Varudhini became pregnant. She gave birth to a child who was named Swarochi. The child was extra-ordinary. In a very short time, he became proficient in all the scriptures. One day, young Swarochi saw a terrified girl near the Mandar Mountain. When the girl saw Swarochi, she pleaded for help. Swarochi assured her and asked about her identity. She said- 'My name is Manorama. Once I had made fun of a sage who was doing penance near the Kailash Mountain. At that time, two of my companions- Vibhavari and Kalavati were also present with me. The sage cursed all three of us. Vibhavari and Kalavati got inflicted with leprosy and tuberculosis due to his curse. Even I was not spared. I am being chased by a ferocious demon since then. I need your protection from that demon. I am giving you this very powerful weapon with which you can successfully kill the demon.'

Swarochi took the weapon. During the conversation between Swarochi and Manorama, a demon arrived just then. The demon wanted to devour Manorama. Swarochi was confused, as he did not want the sage's curse to go futile. He allowed the demon to get hold of Manorama, who then started wailing. Hearing her wail, Swarochi thought of killing the demon. Becoming afraid, the demon released Manorama from his clutches and pleaded Swarochi to spare his life. He then narrated his own story. He said- 'You have rescued me from sage Brahmamitra's curse. Actually, my name is Indivaraksha. I had requested Brahmamitra to teach him the nuances of Ayurveda, which he refused. I decided to learn Ayurveda while sage Brahmamitra taught his disciples by hiding myself. One day, the sage came to know of this. He cursed me to become a demon. I begged for his forgiveness. He said- 'Whatever I have said will definitely come true. You will certainly become a demon. After becoming a demon, you will try to devour your own daughter but would regain your original form of Gandharva due to the touch of Astranal weapon with which you would be attacked. O great soul! Since you have liberated me from the curse, therefore, I hand over this girl to you. Accept her as your wife. I will also bestow the knowledge of Ayurveda, which I had learnt from sage Brahmamitra.'

Manorama requested Swarochi to cure her companions from the diseases they were suffering from. Swarochi assured Manorama that he would certainly cure her companions with the help of Ayurveda, which the demon had taught him. Both Swarochi and Manorama got married. Swarochi then went to her companions and cured them from their diseases.

SWAROCHI'S OTHER MARRIAGES

Markandeya says- 'After getting cured from their respective diseases, both the companions of Manorama expressed their gratitude to Swarochi.

Swarochi married both Vibhavari as well as Kalavati. To show her gratitude, Vibhavari taught Swarochi, a special art that helped him to understand the language of all the living creatures. Kalavati on the other hand while narrating her tale, said- 'A demon named Ali had asked my hand in marriage from my father but my father refused. The demon got angry and killed my father. I wanted to commit suicide but Sati; the wife of Shambhu prevented me from doing so by saying- ' You would be fortunate to become a wife of great soul Swarochi.'

SWAROCHI'S OTHER MARRIAGES

Markandeya says- 'After getting cured from their respective diseases, both the companions of Manorama expressed their gratitude to Swarochi. Swarochi married both Vibhavari as well as Kalavati. To show her gratitude, Vibhavari taught Swarochi, a special art that helped him to understand the language of all the living creatures. Kalavati on the other hand while narrating her tale, said- 'A demon named Ali had asked my hand in marriage from my father but my father refused. The demon got angry and killed my father. I wanted to commit suicide but Sati; the wife of Shambhu prevented me from doing so by saying- ' You would be fortunate to become a wife of great soul Swarochi.'

SWAROCHI'S REPROACHMENT

Markandeya says- After getting married, Swarochi started living happily along with all his three wives at Malaya Mountain. One day, impressed by

the mutual love, Swarochi and his wives had for each other, a female ruddy goose told another one- 'Very rarely are found such couples who have love for each other.' But the other female ruddy goose did not agree. She replied- 'You are wrong. Swarochi is not a blessed man. Actually, he deceives all of his three wives. Even his love for all the three wives is varied. When one wife is desirous of his love, he embraces the other wife. So where is the question of having mutual love for one another? In comparison, my husband and I are blessed because we have mutual love and respect for each other.'

Swarochi, who was listening to their conversation, realised how true the ruddy goose was. But still, he did not change his ways and continued to live with his wives for 100 years. One day while wandering, Swarochi saw a deer surrounded by a herd of doe. One of the doe on having a desire to copulate with the deer started sniffing him in anticipation. But the deer became angry and said- 'Do you think I am as shameless as Swarochi? A man, who is sought by numerous beauties, his condition becomes laughable. Not only does the daily routine of such a man gets disturbed, but also his behaviour is never fair towards his wives.'

SWAROCHI'S REPROACHMENT

Markandeya says- After getting married, Swarochi started living happily along with all his three wives at Malaya Mountain. One day, impressed by the mutual love, Swarochi and his wives had for each other, a female ruddy goose told another one- 'Very rarely are found such couples who have love for each other.' But the other female ruddy goose did not agree. She replied- 'You are wrong. Swarochi is not a blessed man. Actually, he deceives all of his three wives. Even his love for all the three wives is varied. When one wife is desirous of his love, he embraces the other wife. So where is the question of having mutual love for one another? In comparison, my husband and I are blessed because we have mutual love and respect for each other.'

Swarochi, who was listening to their conversation, realised how true the ruddy goose was. But still, he did not change his ways and continued to live with his wives for 100 years. One day while wandering, Swarochi saw a deer surrounded by a herd of doe. One of the doe on having a desire to copulate with the deer started sniffing him in anticipation. But the deer became angry and said- 'Do you think I am as shameless as Swarochi? A man, who is sought by numerous beauties, his condition becomes laughable. Not only does the daily routine of such a man gets disturbed, but also his behaviour is never fair towards his wives.'

THE ORIGIN OF SWAROCHISH MANU

Markandeya says- 'Swarochi became very sad after hearing the deer's utterances. He realised how lowly and mean he had become. He decided

to renounce life after abandoning his wives. But this did not happen because as soon as he met them, he forgot everything about renunciation. He continued to live with his wives. In due course of time, Swarochi begot three sons- Vijay, Merunand and Prabhav. Swarochi ordered the construction of three cities for his sons, which he donated to each of them. The city situated towards the east was given to Vijay while the city situated towards the north named Nandvati was given to Merunand. The city named Tal, which was situated in the south, was given to Prabhav.

Swarochi then lived happily with his wives. One day, Swarochi had gone for hunting. He saw a wild boar and adjusted his arrow on the bowstring to kill it. Just then, a doe arrived and requested him to kill her instead of killing that boar. She said- 'Kill me with your arrow so that I get liberated from my sorrows. I don't want to live because I have become infatuated with such a 'person' whose heart lies somewhere else. My aspirations remain unfulfilled. So death is my only refuge.'

Swarochi was very much amazed. He asked- 'Who is that fellow?' The doe replied- 'It is nobody than you.' Swarochi was puzzled, How can this be? I am a man whereas you are an animal.' The doe then requested Swarochi to embrace her, which Swarochi agreed to do. As soon as Swarochi embraced that doe, she got transformed into a beautiful lady. Swarochi was very much astonished but the doe said that- 'Don't get puzzled. I am the presiding deity of this forest. I have come to seek your help on the request of the deities. It is your duty to help me in giving birth to a son named Manu. Swarochi married her and in course of time, she gave birth to a son. The whole atmosphere became joyous and happy at the birth of that child. Gandharvas started singing songs and the Apsaras danced. The deities showered flowers from heaven. The child was so radiant that all the four directions became illuminated by his brilliance. Swarochi named this child as Dyutiman. This child was later on also known as Swarochish, the son of Swarochi.

One day, while wandering, Swarochi saw a swan who was telling his wife- 'Now, we have become old, so what is the use of remaining attached to each other. Its time, we must seriously start thinking of renouncing life.' But his wife said- 'This world is meant for enjoying sensual pleasures. Even the Brahmins perform Yagyas with that purpose in their mind. All the virtuous people indulge in virtuous activities with the sole desire of

experiencing the pleasures of life. How come the idea of renunciation has entered your mind?' The swan replied- 'One who is not attracted towards sensual pleasures is totally devoted to God. One who is attached by worldly matters can never reach God. Have you not seen the state of Swarochi? How can he be liberated from the sorrows of the world if he is not even willing to shun the attachments? I am not like Swarochi. I know that after enjoying a fully satisfied life, this is the time to renounce everything.' After hearing this, Swarochi was very much ashamed of himself. He decided to do penance. His wives also accompanied him. All of them ultimately went to heaven by the virtue of their penance.

THE ORIGIN OF SWAROCHISH MANU

Markandeya says- 'Swarochi became very sad after hearing the deer's utterances. He realised how lowly and mean he had become. He decided to renounce life after abandoning his wives. But this did not happen because as soon as he met them, he forgot everything about renunciation. He continued to live with his wives. In due course of time, Swarochi begot three sons- Vijay, Merunand and Prabhav. Swarochi ordered the construction of three cities for his sons, which he donated to each of them. The city situated towards the east was given to Vijay while the city situated towards the north named Nandvati was given to Merunand. The city named Tal, which was situated in the south, was given to Prabhav.

Swarochi then lived happily with his wives. One day, Swarochi had gone for hunting. He saw a wild boar and adjusted his arrow on the bowstring to kill it. Just then, a doe arrived and requested him to kill her instead of killing that boar. She said- 'Kill me with your arrow so that I get liberated from my sorrows. I don't want to live because I have become infatuated with such a 'person' whose heart lies somewhere else. My aspirations remain unfulfilled. So death is my only refuge.'

Swarochi was very much amazed. He asked- 'Who is that fellow?' The doe replied- 'It is nobody than you.' Swarochi was puzzled, 'How can this be? I am a man whereas you are an animal.' The doe then requested Swarochi to embrace her, which Swarochi agreed to do. As soon as Swarochi embraced that doe, she got transformed into a beautiful lady. Swarochi was very much astonished but the doe said that- 'Don't get puzzled. I am the presiding deity of this forest. I have come to seek your help on the request of the deities. It is your duty to help me in giving birth to a son named Manu. Swarochi married her and in course of time, she gave birth to a son. The whole atmosphere became joyous and happy at the birth of that child. Gandharvas started singing songs and the Apsaras danced. The deities showered flowers from heaven. The child was so radiant that all the four directions became illuminated by his brilliance. Swarochi named this child as Dyutiman. This child was later on also known as Swarochish, the son of Swarochi.

One day, while wandering, Swarochi saw a swan who was telling his wife- 'Now, we have become old, so what is the use of remaining attached to each other. Its time, we must seriously start thinking of renouncing life.' But his wife said- 'This world is meant for enjoying sensual pleasures. Even the Brahmins perform Yagyas with that purpose in their mind. All the virtuous people indulge in virtuous activities with the sole desire of experiencing the pleasures of life. How come the idea of renunciation has entered your mind?' The swan replied- 'One who is not attracted towards sensual pleasures is totally devoted to God. One who is attached by worldly matters can never reach God. Have you not seen the state of Swarochi? How can he be liberated from the sorrows of the world if he is not even willing to shun the attachments? I am not like Swarochi. I know that after enjoying a fully satisfied life, this is the time to renounce everything.' After hearing this, Swarochi was very much ashamed of himself. He decided to do penance. His wives also accompanied him. All of them ultimately went to heaven by the virtue of their penance.

SWAROCHISH MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'During this Swarochish Manavantar, Indra was famously known as Vipaschit. The other deities were known as Paravat

and Tushit. The names of the Saptarishis who lived during this Manavantar were Urja, Stamb, Pran, Dutt, Ali, Rishabh, Nischar and Arvaveera. Swarochish Manu had seven sons who were very mighty and brave. Chaitra and Kimpurusha were two of them. The descendants of Swarochish ruled the earth till the end of this Manavantar.

Kraustuki asked- 'O lord! Tell me about the treasures of this world.'

Markandeya replied- 'Goddess Lakshmi is the presiding deity of learning (Vidya) called Padmini. After getting perfection in this Vidya, a man becomes the master of eight types of treasures- Padma, Mahapadma, Makar, Kacchupp, Mukunda, Nandak, Neel and Shankh. The treasure called Padma is pure in nature. A man who becomes the master of this treasure mainly deals in things like gold and silver etc. Not only he, but also his descendants derive benefits from this particular treasure. A person who is the master of Mahapadma deals in things like pearls, corals etc. This particular treasure does not abandon a man till his seventh generation. The treasure called Makar is Tamasik in nature. A man who is the master of this particular treasure is basically Tamasik by nature. Such a man has mastery in handling over various weapons like swords, bows and arrows etc. This particular wealth remains with a man only for one generation. The treasure called Kacchupp is also Tamasik in nature. A master of this particular treasure enjoys all the pleasure of this world and he does not trust any person easily. This treasure also remains with a man only for one generation. The treasure called Mukunda comprises of Rajas quality. A master of this treasure becomes proficient in four types of musical instruments like Veena, Venu, Mridang etc. Such a man earns lot of money by exhibiting his art. The treasure called Nandak is a combination of Rajas and Tamas qualities. A man who gets influences by this treasure becomes immobile. Such a man deals in things like metals, jewels, cereals etc. The master of this treasure is very benevolent and kind hearted. This particular treasure remains with a man till the seventh generation. The treasure called Neel is also a combination of Rajas and Satva qualities. A master of this treasure deals in things like clothes, cotton, pearls, fruits, flowers and things made from wood. This particular treasure remains with a man till three generations. A possessor of this treasure is a great social worker and constructs bridge, ponds etc. The treasure called Shankh comprises of Rajas and Tamas qualities. Only one person can master this particular treasure. Such a man enjoys good food

and is fond of wearing expensive clothes. Normally, this type of man does not give shelter to other people and is constantly thinking of his own betterment. '

SWAROCHISH MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'During this Swarochish Manavantar, Indra was famously known as Vipaschit. The other deities were known as Paravat and Tushit. The names of the Saptarishis who lived during this Manavantar were Urja, Stamb, Pran, Dutt, Ali, Rishabh, Nischar and Arvaveera. Swarochish Manu had seven sons who were very mighty and brave. Chaitra and Kimpurusha were two of them. The descendants of Swarochish ruled the earth till the end of this Manavantar.

Kraustuki asked- 'O lord! Tell me about the treasures of this world.'

Markandeya replied- 'Goddess Lakshmi is the presiding deity of learning (Vidya) called Padmini. After getting perfection in this Vidya, a man becomes the master of eight types of treasures- Padma, Mahapadma, Makar, Kacchupp, Mukunda, Nandak, Neel and Shankh. The treasure called Padma is pure in nature. A man who becomes the master of this treasure mainly deals in things like gold and silver etc. Not only he, but also his descendants derive benefits from this particular treasure. A person who is the master of Mahapadma deals in things like pearls, corals etc. This particular treasure does not abandon a man till his seventh generation. The treasure called Makar is Tamasik in nature. A man who is the master of this particular treasure is basically Tamasik by nature. Such a man has mastery in handling over various weapons like swords, bows and arrows etc. This particular wealth remains with a man only for one generation. The treasure called Kacchupp is also Tamasik in nature. A master of this particular treasure enjoys all the pleasure of this world and he does not trust any person easily. This treasure also remains with a man only for one generation. The treasure called Mukunda comprises of Rajas quality. A master of this treasure becomes proficient in four types of musical instruments like Veena, Venu, Mridang etc. Such a man earns lot of money by exhibiting his art. The treasure called Nandak is a combination of Rajas and Tamas qualities. A man who gets influences by this treasure becomes immobile. Such a man deals in things like metals, jewels, cereals etc. The master of this treasure is very benevolent and kind hearted. This particular treasure remains with a man till the seventh generation. The treasure called Neel is also a combination of Rajas and Satva qualities. A master of this treasure deals in things like clothes, cotton, pearls, fruits, flowers and things made from wood. This particular treasure remains with a man till three generations. A possessor of this treasure is a great social worker and constructs bridge, ponds etc.

The treasure called Shankh comprises of Rajas and Tamas qualities. Only one person can master this particular treasure. Such a man enjoys good food and is fond of wearing expensive clothes. Normally, this type of man does not give shelter to other people and is constantly thinking of his own betterment. '

AUTTAM MANVANTAR

KING UTTAM ABANDONS HIS WIFE

Kraustuki says- 'O lord! Now tell me about the AuttamManavantar.'

Markandeya replied- 'Uttanpada and Suruchi had a son named Uttam. Uttam was married to Bahula. Bahula did not love Uttam and always showed disrespect towards him. One day, while both of them were sitting in the court, watching the proceedings, Uttam offered a betel leaf to Bahula which she refused, King Uttam felt dishonored. He ordered his attendant to abandon the queen in the forest. Bahula too was very happy, thinking that now she will not have to be in the company of Uttam. This way, Bahula was taken to the forest.

One day, a sad Brahmin came to Uttam and said- 'O king! Somebody has abducted my wife. I need your help in finding out my lost wife. Uttam asked the Brahmin about the nature, physical construction and about the age of his wife. The Brahmin revealed all the facts related with his wife. The king was not impressed. The facts, which the Brahmin had furnished, went to prove that his wife was not a chaste lady. The king expressed his view about his wife in so many words. He said- 'What is the use of having such a wicked wife? Forget about her. I will give you another one with all the good qualities.' The Brahmin replied- 'O king! It is one's duty to protect one's wife no matter how wicked she may be. By protecting your wife, your children also get protected. A man who does not protect his wife, has a son of hybrid class. His ancestors are degraded from the heaven because of such type of sons. I am not able to perform my religious obligations because of the absence of my wife. O king! Please help me.'

While searching the Brahmin's wife, King Uttam saw a sage at a secluded place. When the sage saw King Uttam, he wanted to offer some Ardhya (some type of offering) to him, which his disciples prohibited him from doing. Then, the sage changed his mind and offered his seat to the king. The king asked about the reason why he changed his mind of offering the Ardhya. The sage replied- 'Though you are the descendant of Swayambhu Manu, but since you have committed a grave sin by abandoning your wife, I decided that you are not fit to be offered the Ardhya. No matter

how mean your wife is, it is your duty to protect her at all costs.' King Uttam was very ashamed of himself. He asked the sage about the whereabouts of the Brahmin's wife. The sage replied- 'His wife has been abducted by the demon, Balak- the son of Adri. He has kept her in the forest called Utpalavat. Go and help the Brahmin to meet his wife so that he doesn't commit a grave sin like you.

KING UTTAM ABANDONS HIS WIFE

Kraustuki says- 'O lord! Now tell me about the Auttam Manavantar.'

Markandeya replied- 'Uttanpada and Suruchi had a son named Uttam. Uttam was married to Bahula. Bahula did not love Uttam and always showed disrespect towards him. One day, while both of them were sitting in the court, watching the proceedings, Uttam offered a betel leaf to Bahula which she refused, King Uttam felt dishonored. He ordered his attendant to abandon the queen in the forest. Bahula too was very happy, thinking that now she will not have to be in the company of Uttam. This way, Bahula was taken to the forest.

One day, a sad Brahmin came to Uttam and said- 'O king! Somebody has abducted my wife. I need your help in finding out my lost wife. Uttam asked the Brahmin about the nature, physical construction and about the age of his wife. The Brahmin revealed all the facts related with his wife. The king was not impressed. The facts, which the Brahmin had furnished, went to prove that his wife was not a chaste lady. The king expressed his view about his wife in so many words. He said- 'What is the use of having such a wicked wife? Forget about her. I will give you another one with all the good qualities.' The Brahmin replied- 'O king! It is one's duty to protect one's wife no matter how wicked she may be. By protecting your wife, your children also get protected. A man who does not protect his wife, has a son of hybrid class. His ancestors are degraded from the heaven because of such type of sons. I am not able to perform my religious obligations because of the absence of my wife. O king! Please help me.'

While searching the Brahmin's wife, King Uttam saw a sage at a secluded place. When the sage saw King Uttam, he wanted to offer some Ardhya (some type of offering) to him, which his disciples prohibited him from doing. Then, the sage changed his mind and offered his seat to the king. The king asked about the reason why he changed his mind of offering the Ardhya. The sage replied- 'Though you are the descendant of Swayambhu Manu, but since you have committed a grave sin by abandoning your wife, I decided that you are not fit to be offered the Ardhya. No matter how mean your wife is, it is your duty to protect her at all costs.' King Uttam was very ashamed of himself. He asked the sage about the whereabouts of the Brahmin's wife. The sage replied- 'His wife has been abducted by the demon, Balak- the son of Adri. He has kept her in the forest called Utpalavat. Go and help the Brahmin to meet his wife so that he doesn't commit a grave sin like you.

BRAHMIN'S WIFE RETURNS HOME

Markandeya says- 'When King Uttam reached Utpalavat forest, he saw a woman eating a Sriphal fruit. The king asked that woman whether she

was the wife of that Brahmin- Susharma. The woman replied in the affirmative and said- 'The demon abducted me while I was sleeping. Since that day, he has kept me here. I am very afraid of that demon.' The king then asked the woman about the demon's whereabouts. The woman pointed towards the direction of the demon's path. The king went in that direction.

When the demon saw the king approaching him, he bowed down in reverence and said- 'O king! What can I do for you?' The king asked- 'Why have you abducted the wife of this Brahmin.' The demon replied- 'I am not the demon who devours human beings. I devour their 'flaws'. I have many beautiful wives. So where is the need of aspiring for another woman? Actually, the Brahmin is a very learned man and has mastered the mantras. By chanting Rakshodna mantras during oblations, he has increased my hunger by making incantations. Therefore, I have abducted his wife to prevent him from accomplishing any Yagya.'

The king became very sad. He thought- 'What a grave sin I have committed by abandoning my wife! Earlier, that sage too did not find me fit for giving Ardhya. Now, this demon is also aware of the importance of one's wife in religious ceremonies. How cruel I have been to my wife.' The demon told the king- 'O king! What should I do for you?' The king replied- 'Devour the flaws of this woman so that she becomes humble. After that, carry her back home. The demon acted as per the instructions of King Uttam. As a result, the Brahmin's wife became very humble. She said to the king- 'It seems, there is no fault of this demon. Perhaps, I must have caused separation between a husband and wife, in my previous life and for that very reason, I was forced to suffer this separation with my husband in this present life. The demon said- 'O king! What else do you want from me? The king said- 'You must be present before me whenever I remember you.' The demon agreed. He carried the Brahmin's wife to her home.

BRAHMIN'S WIFE RETURNS HOME

Markandeya says- 'When King Uttam reached Utpalavat forest, he saw a woman eating a Sriphal fruit. The king asked that woman whether she was the wife of that Brahmin- Susharma. The woman replied in the affirmative and said- 'The demon abducted me while I was sleeping. Since that day, he has kept me here. I am very afraid of that demon.' The king then asked the woman about the demon's whereabouts. The woman pointed towards the direction of the demon's path. The king went in that direction.

When the demon saw the king approaching him, he bowed down in reverence and said- 'O king! What can I do for you?' The king asked- 'Why have you abducted the wife of this Brahmin.' The demon replied- 'I am not the demon who devours human beings. I devour their 'flaws'. I have many beautiful wives. So where is the need of aspiring for another woman? Actually, the Brahmin is a very learned man and has mastered the mantras. By chanting Rakshodna mantras during oblations, he has increased my hunger by making incantations. Therefore, I have abducted his wife to prevent him from accomplishing any Yagya.'

The king became very sad. He thought- 'What a grave sin I have committed by abandoning my wife! Earlier, that sage too did not find me fit for giving Ardhya. Now, this demon is also aware of the importance of one's wife in religious ceremonies. How cruel I have been to my wife.' The demon told the king- 'O king! What should I do for you?' The king replied- 'Devour the flaws of this woman so that she becomes humble. After that, carry her back home. The demon acted as per the instructions of King Uttam. As a result, the Brahmin's wife became very humble. She said to the king- 'It seems, there is no fault of this demon. Perhaps, I must have caused separation between a husband and wife, in my previous life and for that very reason, I was forced to suffer this separation with my husband in this present life. The demon said- 'O king! What else do you want from me? The king said- 'You must be present before me whenever I remember you.' The demon agreed. He carried the Brahmin's wife to her home.

THE SAGE AND KING UTTAM AND BIRTH OF AUTTAM MANU

Markandeya says- 'King Uttam wondered as to what should he do to get liberated from the sins of abandoning his wife. He requested the sage to

help him in this regard. The sage informed the king that his wife was living at Ranatal. The king of the serpents- Kapotak is looking after her. Kapotak has a daughter named Nanda. Being concerned about her mother's future, Nanda had hidden your wife. The sage became very furious and cursed her. As a result, she became dumb. Uttam, your wife was always a chaste woman. It was only due to evil influences of the planets that she was not paying adequate attention to you. Now, you should go and take her back to your home. Uttam returned back to his palace.'

Markandeya says- 'Uttam met the Brahmin and told him that now as he had reunited with his wife, it was now his turn to help him (king) to re-unite with his wife. The Brahmin assured Uttam that he would perform a Yagya named Mitravinda, which would help him to achieve his goal. He requested Uttam to bring his wife so that the Yagya could be performed. Uttam remembered Nisachar, a demon and requested him to bring his wife. Nisachar went to Patal loka and brought his wife. The queen was very happy to see her husband once again. She requested him to cure Nanda who had become dumb for no fault of hers. Saraswat Japa was chanted to cure Nanda. When Nanda regained her voice, she came to the oblation site and after embracing the queen, blessed her by saying that she would become a proud mother of a very famous son named Manu. After that, she went back to Patal loka. In due course of time, the queen gave birth to a son who was named Auttam by the sages.'

THE SAGE AND KING UTTAM AND BIRTH OF AUTTAM MANU

Markandeya says- 'King Uttam wondered as to what should he do to get liberated from the sins of abandoning his wife. He requested the sage to help him in this regard. The sage informed the king that his wife was living at Ranatal. The king of the serpents- Kapotak is looking after her. Kapotak has a daughter named Nanda. Being concerned about her mother's future, Nanda had hidden your wife. The sage became very furious and cursed her. As a result, she became dumb. Uttam, your wife was always a chaste woman. It was only due to evil influences of the planets that she was not paying adequate attention to you. Now, you should go and take her back to your home. Uttam returned back to his palace.'

Markandeya says- 'Uttam met the Brahmin and told him that now as he had reunited with his wife, it was now his turn to help him (king) to re-unite with his wife. The Brahmin assured Uttam that he would perform a Yagya named Mitravinda, which would help him to achieve his goal. He requested Uttam to bring his wife so that the Yagya could be performed. Uttam remembered Nisachar, a demon and requested him to bring his wife. Nisachar went to Patal loka and brought his wife. The queen was very happy to see her husband once again. She requested him to cure Nanda who had become dumb for no fault of hers. Saraswat Japa was chanted to cure Nanda. When Nanda regained her voice, she came to the oblation site and after embracing the queen, blessed her by saying that she would become a proud mother of a very famous son named Manu. After that, she went back to Patal loka. In due course of time, the queen gave birth to a son who was named Auttam by the sages. '

AUTTAM MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'O sage! The following Ganas who reigned during Auttam Manavantar are very famous. They are the first Gana- Swadhama.

The second Gana Satya was related with the deities. The third Gana was Shiva, the fourth was named Pratardan and the fifth Gana was Vashvarti. Each of the Ganas are the master of twelve deities. Indra by the name of Sushanti rules all the three worlds by the virtue of accomplishing one hundred Ashwamedha Yagyas. He along with Shiva and Satya etc. bestows peace to the world. The descendants of Auttam ruled the whole earth for the full period of Auttam Manavantar. The Saptarishis during this Auttam Manavantar were the sons of sage Mahatapa. The description of this third Manavantar is now complete. Now I am going to tell you about the fourth Manavantar, which is also known as Tamas Manavantar.'

AUTTAM MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'O sage! The following Ganas who reigned during Auttam Manavantar are very famous. They are the first Gana- Swadhama. The second Gana Satya was related with the deities. The third Gana was Shiva, the fourth was named Pratardan and the fifth Gana was Vashvarti. Each of the Ganas are the master of twelve deities. Indra by the name of Sushanti rules all the three worlds by the virtue of accomplishing one hundred Ashwamedha Yagyas. He along with Shiva and Satya etc. bestows peace to the world. The descendants of Auttam ruled the whole earth for the full period of Auttam Manavantar. The Saptarishis during this Auttam Manavantar were the sons of sage Mahatapa. The description of this third Manavantar is now complete. Now I am going to tell you about the fourth Manavantar, which is also known as Tamas Manavantar.'

TAMAS MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'There used to live a king named Swarashtra. The deity Surya had blessed him with a long life. The king had one hundred wives,

but they were not as lucky as he was as far as enjoying a long life was concerned. One by one, all of them died. A king from the neighbouring state named Vimard defeated him in a battle. After being defeated, Swarashtra went at the bank of river Vitasta and started doing penance.

One day, it rained heavily and the king was swept by the ferocious current. The drowning king saw a doe and held her tail to save his life. The doe told the king that she was aware about the lust of the king. She also told her that her pregnancy was causing hindrance in making love. The king was amazed. He asked as to how she could speak like a human being despite of being an animal. The doe replied that she was his most beloved queen Mahishi in her previous life. She had killed a pair of deer while they were making love. The doe had died but the deer survived. He had cursed her to become a doe in her next life. The deer also revealed to the queen that she would give birth to the mighty Lola. The same Lola would later on become famous as Manu after defeating his father's enemies. The king was very pleased at this. In due course of time, the doe gave birth to a son after which she went to the heaven. The sages named the son Tamas. When Tamas became young, he did penance to please Surya. Surya gave him many weapons by the help of which Tamas was able to defeat all his enemies. He brought all the enemies in front of his father but Swarashtra forgave everybody. He gave his kingdom to Tamas.

Markandeya says- 'Tamas ruled over the whole earth. Four types of deities were famous during this Manavantar- Satya Gana, Sudhi Gana, Surup Gana and Hari Gana. Indra was known as Shikhi during this Manavantar. The names of these Saptarishis who lived during this Manavantar were Jyotirdharma, Prithu, Kavya, Chaitra, Agni, Balak and Peevar. The sons of Tamas Manu were very mighty. Their names were Nar, Kshanti, Shant, Dant, Jahnu and Janghaetc.

TAMAS MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'There used to live a king named Swarashtra. The deity Surya had blessed him with a long life. The king had one hundred wives, but they were not as lucky as he was as far as enjoying a long life was concerned. One by one, all of them died. A king from the neighbouring state named Vimard defeated him in a battle. After being defeated, Swarashtra went at the bank of river Vitasta and started doing penance.

One day, it rained heavily and the king was swept by the ferocious current. The drowning king saw a doe and held her tail to save his life. The doe told the king that she was aware about the lust of the king. She also told her that her pregnancy was causing hindrance in making love. The king was amazed. He asked as to how she could speak like a human being despite of being an animal. The doe replied that she was his most beloved queen Mahishi in her previous life. She had killed a pair of deer while they were making love. The doe had died but the deer survived. He had cursed her to become a doe in her next life. The deer also revealed to the queen that she would give birth to the mighty Lola. The same Lola would later on become famous as Manu after defeating his father's enemies. The king was very pleased at this. In due course of time, the doe gave birth to a son after which she went to the heaven. The sages named the son Tamas. When Tamas became young, he did penance to please Surya. Surya gave him many weapons by the help of which Tamas was able to defeat all his enemies. He brought all the enemies in front of his father but Swarashtra forgave everybody. He gave his kingdom to Tamas.

Markandeya says- 'Tamas ruled over the whole earth. Four types of deities were famous during this Manavantar- Satya Gana, Sudhi Gana, Surup Gana and Hari Gana. Indra was known as Shikhi during this Manavantar. The names of these Saptarishis who lived during this Manavantar were Jyotirdharma, Prithu, Kavya, Chaitra, Agni, Balak and Peevar. The sons of Tamas Manu were very mighty. Their names were Nar, Kshanti, Shant, Dant, Jahnu and Jangha etc.

RAIVAT MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'Now I am going to tell you about Raivat Manu. His father was Ritvak. Raivat was born in Revati Nakshatra. Later on, he

became infamous for his loose character. His father was very worried about him. Ritvak asked sage Garg as to how such a mean child had been born to him. Sage Garg replied- 'The negative qualities of your son is due to his birth in Revati Nakshatra. Ritvak became very furious with Revati Nakshatra and cursed it as a result of which, Revati Nakshatra fell down on Kumud Mountain.

All the four directions became illuminated and a reservoir was created. A girl manifested from that reservoir. A sage named Pramauchi brought that girl to his hermitage and named her as Revati. When the girl became young, the sage was very worried about her marriage. One day, Hutashan revealed to him that she would get married to Durgam, the eldest son of Swayambhu Manu. One day Durgam arrived at Pramauchi's hermitage. He saw Revati and asked her- 'O beautiful lady! Can you tell me where sage Pramauchi is? I have come here to pay my obeisance to him. At that time, sage Pramauchi was busy performing his Yagya. Hearing his voice, he came out. Seeing Durgam at his hermitage, he instructed his disciple, Gautam to bring Ardhya for him. The sage said- 'Durgam is not only a king but also my son-in-law.' Durgam was very surprised at what sage Pramauchi had said. He asked sage Pramauchi as to how could he be his son-in-law and who was his wife? The sage replied- 'Your wife is none other than the girl whom you met sometime earlier. Her name is Revati. Then the sage narrated the whole story how sage Garg had prophesised about Revati's marriage with Durgam.' Durgam started contemplating on this peculiar situation.

Sage Pramauchi started to make arrangements for the marriage. When Revati saw the arrangements being made for her marriage, she requested him to get her married in Revati Nakshatra. Sage Pramauchi revealed to her that this particular Nakshatra did not exist in the sky any more. Revati then requested him to establish this Nakshatra in the sky. Sage Pramauchi reestablished Revati Nakshatra in the sky by the help of his divine powers. Thus, Revati and Durgam got married. After getting married, Durgam requested the sage to bless him with a mighty son. Sage Pramauchi blessed him. After sometime, Revati gave birth to Raivat Manu. Raivat Manu was proficient in all the scriptures. The chief Ganas of Raivat Manavantar were Sumedha, Bhupati, Vaikunth and Amitabhaichar. There were fourteen deities present in each of the Ganas. The presiding deity of these deities was Indra by the name of Vibhu. The

Saptarishis present during this Manavantar were Hiranyaroma, VedSri, Urdhvabahu, Vedbahu, Sudhama, Mahamuni, Paryanya and Vashishta. Raivat Manu had four sons- Balabandhu, Mahaveerya, Suyastanya and Satyak.

RAIVAT MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'Now I am going to tell you about Raivat Manu. His father was Ritvak. Raivat was born in Revati Nakshatra. Later on, he became infamous for his loose character. His father was very worried about him. Ritvak asked sage Garg as to how such a mean child had been born to him. Sage Garg replied- 'The negative qualities of your son is due to his birth in Revati Nakshatra. Ritvak became very furious with Revati Nakshatra and cursed it as a result of which, Revati Nakshatra fell down on Kumud Mountain.

All the four directions became illuminated and a reservoir was created. A girl manifested from that reservoir. A sage named Pramauchi brought that girl to his hermitage and named her as Revati. When the girl became young, the sage was very worried about her marriage. One day, Hutashan revealed to him that she would get married to Durgam, the eldest son of Swayambhu Manu. One day Durgam arrived at Pramauchi's hermitage. He saw Revati and asked her- 'O beautiful lady! Can you tell me where sage Pramauchi is? I have come here to pay my obeisance to him. At that time, sage Pramauchi was busy performing his Yagya. Hearing his voice, he came out. Seeing Durgam at his hermitage, he instructed his disciple, Gautam to bring Ardhya for him. The sage said- 'Durgam is not only a king but also my son-in-law.' Durgam was very surprised at what sage Pramauchi had said. He asked sage Pramauchi as to how could he be his son-in-law and who was his wife? The sage replied- 'Your wife is none other than the girl whom you met sometime earlier. Her name is Revati. Then the sage narrated the whole story how sage Garg had prophesised about Revati's marriage with Durgam.' Durgam started contemplating on this peculiar situation.

Sage Pramauchi started to make arrangements for the marriage. When Revati saw the arrangements being made for her marriage, she requested him to get her married in Revati Nakshatra. Sage Pramauchi revealed to her that this particular Nakshatra did not exist in the sky any more. Revati then requested him to establish this Nakshatra in the sky. Sage Pramauchi re-established Revati Nakshatra in the sky by the help of his divine powers. Thus, Revati and Durgam got married. After getting married, Durgam requested the sage to bless him with a mighty son. Sage Pramauchi blessed him. After sometime, Revati gave birth to Raivat Manu. Raivat Manu was proficient in all the scriptures. The chief Ganas of Raivat Manavantar were Sumedha, Bhupati, Vaikunth and Amitabhaichar. There were fourteen deities present in each of the Ganas. The presiding deity of these deities was Indra by the name of Vibhu. The Saptarishis present during this Manavantar were Hiranyaroma, VedSri, Urdhvabahu, Vedbahu, Sudhama, Mahamuni, Paryanya and Vashishta. Raivat Manu had four sons- Balabandhu, Mahaveerya, Suyastanya and Satyak.

CHAKSHUSH MANVANTAR

Chakshush had manifested from the eye (Chakshu) of Lord Brahma in his previous birth. For this reason, he was known as Chakshush. Chakshush was born to Anmitra and Giribhadra. After taking birth, he was abducted by Jatharini and exchanged with the son of King Vikrant who was sleeping besides his mother. Being unaware of this event, Vikrant considered him as his own son and named him as Anand. When Anand grew up, once, his Guru instructed him to make salutations to his mother. Anand replied- "To whom should I make salutations? The one who has given birth to me or to the one who has brought me up and nurtured me? The Guru was surprised by his reply. He said- "O son! Haimini, the wife of Vikrant has given birth to you and so, she is your mother. But Anand replied back- "This woman is not my mother. I have taken birth from somebody else's womb. This woman is the mother of Chaitra. I am the son of Anmitra and Giribhadra. Jatharini had abducted me and brought me here. She had also carried Chaitra to Punarva's place and kept him over there. Jatharini had devoured the son of Punarva. Now tell me, who is my mother and to whom should I make salutations?" The Guru became confused, so were the king and the queen. Anand went to the forest and started doing penance. Prajapati became pleased by his tremendous penance and appeared before him. He said- "O son! What makes you undertake such a severe penance? Anand replied- "O lord! I am doing this penance with the purpose of becoming free from all the bondage of my Karma and to purify myself. Brahma said- "Only the mortal men are fit to become liberated because they are bound by their Karmas but you being a virtuous person are not bound by your Karmas. With my blessings, you would become the sixth Manu. There is no need for you to do penance. Lord Brahma named him as Chakshush. Later on, he became famous as Chakshush Manu. When Chakshush Manu attained marriageable age, he married Vidarbha, the daughter of Ugra. Markandeya says- "Apya was the most prominent Gana of Chakshush Manavantar. He was the master of eight deities. The second Gana was called Prasoot. He too was the master of eight deities. Similarly, there were two more Ganas- Bhatyakhya and Uthaga. Each of them was the master of eight deities. The presiding deity of these deities was Indra by the name of Manojav. The Saptarishis present during this Manavantar were Sumedha, Viraja, Havishman, Unnat, Madhu, Ati and Sahishnu. Chakshush had many mighty sons like Uru, Kuru, Shatadryumna etc. Now I am going to tell

you about the seventh Manu who was called Vaivasvat."

CHAKSHUSH MANVANTAR

Chakshush had manifested from the eye (Chakshu) of Lord Brahma in his previous birth. For this reason, he was known as Chakshush. Chakshush was born to Anmitra and Giribhadra. After taking birth, he was abducted by Jatharini and exchanged with the son of King Vikrant who was sleeping besides his mother.

Being unaware of this event, Vikrant considered him as his own son and named him as Anand. When Anand grew up, once, his Guru instructed him to make salutations to his mother. Anand replied- "To whom should I make salutations? The one who has given birth to me or to the one who has brought me up and nurtured me? The Guru was surprised by his reply. He said- "O son! Haimini, the wife of Vikrant has given birth to you and so, she is your mother. But Anand replied back- "This woman is not my mother. I have taken birth from somebody else's womb. This woman is the mother of Chaitra. I am the son of Anmitra and Giribhadra. Jatharini had abducted me and brought me here. She had also carried Chaitra to Punarva's place and kept him over there. Jatharini had devoured the son of Punarva. Now tell me, who is my mother and to whom should I make salutations?" The Guru became confused, so were the king and the queen. Anand went to the forest and started doing penance. Prajapati became pleased by his tremendous penance and appeared before him. He said- "O son! What makes you undertake such a severe penance? Anand replied- "O lord! I am doing this penance with the purpose of becoming free from all the bondage of my Karma and to purify myself. Brahma said- "Only the mortal men are fit to become liberated because they are bound by their Karmas but you being a virtuous person are not bound by your Karmas. With my blessings, you would become the sixth Manu. There is no need for you to do penance. Lord Brahma named him as Chakshush. Later on, he became famous as Chakshush Manu. When Chakshush Manu attained marriageable age, he married Vidarbha, the daughter of Ugra. Markandeya says- "Apya was the most prominent Gana of Chakshush Manavantar. He was the master of eight deities. The second Gana was called Prasoot. He too was the master of eight deities. Similarly, there were two more Ganas- Bhatyakhya and Uthaga. Each of them was the master of eight deities. The presiding deity of these deities was Indra by the name of Manojav. The Saptarishis present during this Manavantar were Sumedha, Viraja, Havishman, Unnat, Madhu, Ati and Sahishnu. Chakshush had many mighty sons like Uru, Kuru, Shatadryumna etc. Now I am going to tell you about the seventh Manu who was called Vaivasvat."

VAIVASVAT MANVANTAR

THE BIRTH OF ASHWINI KUMARS AND REVANT

Markandeya says- 'The Manu of Vaivasvat Manavantar was famously known as Vaivasvat as he was the son of Vivasvan (Surya). Surya was married to Sangya- the daughter of Vishwakarma. Although, she had borne two sons (Vaivasvat and Yama) and a daughter (Yami) from Surya, yet the radiance of Surya was too much for her to bear. So, one day, she created a shadow identity of herself and requested it to act as if she was the real Sangya. She said to the shadow- 'As long as your identity remains unknown, I would not reveal myself.'

After this Sangya went back to her father's home and ultimately to Uttarkuru where she started doing penance in the guise of a mare. Surya on the other hand was not aware of Sangya's doings. In due course of time, the shadow of Sangya gave birth to many children. Though she loved her own children, she never had the same attitude towards the three sons of Sangya. Seeing her discriminatory attitude, Yama tried to kick her with his leg. The shadow of Sangya became furious. She cursed Yama's leg to get severed from his body. Yama became very scared. He went to his father Surya accompanied by Vaivasvat and Yami.

He told Surya- 'A mother can never curse her own child. So, this woman is certainly not our mother because she has cursed me.' Surya called the shadow of Sangya and asked about her true identity but Sangya's shadow kept mum. Seeing her quiet, Surya became very angry and he held her by her hair and was just about to curse her when, out of fear, she revealed the whole story. Surya went to the place of his father-in-law, Vishwakarma and asked about Sangya. Vishwakarma feigned ignorance. He said- 'She did come but she had returned to your place after staying here for a while.' Vishwakarma knew the reason why Sangya had abandoned her husband. So, he subdued the radiance of Surya.

VAIVASVAT MANVANTAR

THE BIRTH OF ASHWINI KUMARS AND REVANT

Markandeya says- 'The Manu of Vaivasvat Manavantar was famously known as Vaivasvat as he was the son of Vivasvan (Surya). Surya was married to Sangya- the daughter of Vishwakarma. Although, she had borne two sons (Vaivasvat and Yama) and a daughter (Yami) from Surya, yet the radiance of Surya was too much for her to bear. So, one day, she created a shadow identity of herself and requested it to act as if she was the real Sangya. She said to the shadow- 'As long as your identity remains unknown, I would not reveal myself.'

After this Sangya went back to her father's home and ultimately to Uttarkuru where she started doing penance in the guise of a mare. Surya on the other hand was not aware of Sangya's doings. In due course of time, the shadow of Sangya gave birth to many children. Though she loved her own children, she never had the same attitude towards the three sons of Sangya. Seeing her discriminatory attitude, Yama tried to kick her with his leg. The shadow of Sangya became furious. She cursed Yama's leg to get severed from his body. Yama became very scared. He went to his father Surya accompanied by Vaivasvat and Yami.

He told Surya- 'A mother can never curse her own child. So, this woman is certainly not our mother because she has cursed me.' Surya called the shadow of Sangya and asked about her true identity but Sangya's shadow kept mum. Seeing her quiet, Surya became very angry and he held her by her hair and was just about to curse her when, out of fear, she revealed the whole story. Surya went to the place of his father-in-law, Vishwakarma and asked about Sangya. Vishwakarma feigned ignorance. He said- 'She did come but she had returned to your place after staying here for a while.' Vishwakarma knew the reason why Sangya had abandoned her husband. So, he subdued the radiance of Surya.

THE SAGES OF SAVARNIK MANVANTAR

Kraustuki says- 'O revered sage! You have already enlightened me by revealing the names of seven different Manus of each Manavantar. You

have also told me about the deities, the kings and the sages who existed during each Manavantar. Now, I am curious to know about the seven Manus, the deities and the sages of this Kalpa.'

Markandeya says- 'Savarni, the son of Sangya's shadow would be the eighth Manu. The Saptarishis of Savami Manavantar would be Rama, Vyasa, Galav, Diptiman, Krip, RishyaSring and Drauni (Ashwatthama). The three main categories of deities existing during this Manavantar would be Sutapa, Amitabh and Mukhya. Each of them is the master of 20 Ganas. Among these, the Ganas- Prabhakar, Prabhas, Dathita, Dharma, Tejah, Rashmi and Vakratu come under the authority of the deity, Sutapa. Similarly, the deity Amitabh is the master of the Ganas like Prabhu, Vibhu and Vibhas etc. The deity Mukhya is the lord of Ganas like Dama, Dant, Rit, Soma and Vint. All of them are the offspring of sage Kashyapa. They will become famous as the deities of Savarni Manavantar. Bali, the son of Virochan would hold the post of Indra during this Manavantar. Virja, Arvaveera, Nirmoha, Satyavak, Kriti and Vishnu will be the sons of Savarni Manu.'

THE SAGES OF SAVARNIK MANVANTAR

Kraustuki says- 'O revered sage! You have already enlightened me by revealing the names of seven different Manus of each Manavantar. You have also told me about the deities, the kings and the sages who existed during each Manavantar. Now, I am curious to know about the seven Manus, the deities and the sages of this Kalpa.'

Markandeya says- 'Savarni, the son of Sangya's shadow would be the eighth Manu. The Saptarishis of Savarni Manavantar would be Rama, Vyasa, Galav, Diptiman, Krip, RishyaSring and Drauni (Ashwatthama). The three main categories of deities existing during this Manavantar would be Sutapa, Amitabh and Mukhya. Each of them is the master of 20 Ganas. Among these, the Ganas- Prabhakar, Prabhas, Dathita, Dharma, Tejah, Rashmi and Vakratu come under the authority of the deity, Sutapa. Similarly, the deity Amitabh is the master of the Ganas like Prabhu, Vibhu and Vibhas etc. The deity Mukhya is the lord of Ganas like Dama, Dant, Rit, Soma and Vint. All of them are the offspring of sage Kashyapa. They will become famous as the deities of Savarni Manavantar. Bali, the son of Virochan would hold the post of Indra during this Manavantar. Virja, Arvaveera, Nirmoha, Satyavak, Kriti and Vishnu will be the sons of Savarni Manu.'

KILLING OF MADHU KAITABHA

Markandeya says- 'King Surath was the descendant of Chaitra. He was defeated in the battle against King Kolvidhvansi. All his wealth was

deceitfully taken over by his cunning ministers. King Surath fled to the forest to save his life where he met a sage named Medha. He stayed with him at his hermitage but after a while, the thought of his lost kingdom began to torment him. One day, while he was roaming near the hermitage, he met a Vaishya named Samadhi. Samadhi narrated his woeful story as to how his sons had driven him out of his home after taking all his wealth. But inspite of this, his love for them remained intact. Both Surath and Samadhi went to sage Medha and told him that- 'Inspite of our miserable condition, we are unable to understand why we still have affection and love for our near and dear ones even though they have cheated us.' Sage Medha replied- 'O king! Due to the illusions of this world, human beings are deeply influenced by attachments. So, there is nothing to be amazed. Goddess Mahamaya influences the mind of each human being. She does not spare even the most learned one. When she becomes pleased, she bestows liberation.' The king asked- 'Who is this Mahamaya? Please tell us about her.'

Sage Medha then told them about Mahamaya- 'O king! Goddess Mahamaya is beyond the reach of origin and destruction. When the whole earth was submerged in water at the end of the Kalpa, Lord Vishnu took refuge of Yoganidra. While He was sleeping, two demons, Madhu and Kaitabh manifested from the wax of his ears. The demons wanted to attack Brahma. Lord Brahma got scared and sought help from Goddess Nidra. She manifested from the body of Lord Vishnu and appeared before Lord Brahma. Lord Vishnu woke up from his sleep. He saw that the demons were trying to kill Lord Brahma. He fought with both the demons for 5,000 years. Goddess Mahamaya influenced the demons' minds as a result of which, they asked some boons from Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu granted the boons to them and said- 'Both of you will get killed by me.' The demons said- 'We are ready to get killed on the condition that you kill us only in such a place where there is no water.' As the whole earth was submerged in water, so the demons thought that Lord Vishnu would not be able to get a base to kill them. But Lord Vishnu severed their heads after making them sit on His thighs.

KILLING OF MADHU KAITABHA

Markandeya says- 'King Surath was the descendant of Chaitra. He was defeated in the battle against King Kolvidhvansi. All his wealth was deceitfully taken over by his cunning ministers. King Surath fled to the forest to save his life where he met a sage named Medha. He stayed with him at his hermitage but after a while, the thought of his lost kingdom began to torment him. One day, while he was roaming near the hermitage, he met a Vaishya named Samadhi. Samadhi narrated his woeful story as to how his sons had driven him out of his home after taking all his wealth. But inspite of this, his love for them remained intact. Both Surath and Samadhi went to sage Medha and told him that- 'Inspite of our miserable condition, we are unable to understand why we still have affection and love for our near and dear ones even though they have cheated us.' Sage Medha replied- 'O king! Due to the illusions of this world, human beings are deeply influenced by attachments. So, there is nothing to be amazed. Goddess Mahamaya influences the mind of each human being. She does not spare even the most learned one. When she becomes pleased, she bestows liberation.' The king asked- 'Who is this Mahamaya? Please tell us about her.'

Sage Medha then told them about Mahamaya- 'O king! Goddess Mahamaya is beyond the reach of origin and destruction. When the whole earth was submerged in water at the end of the Kalpa, Lord Vishnu took refuge of Yoganidra. While He was sleeping, two demons, Madhu and Kaitabh manifested from the wax of his ears. The demons wanted to attack Brahma. Lord Brahma got scared and sought help from Goddess Nidra. She manifested from the body of Lord Vishnu and appeared before Lord Brahma. Lord Vishnu woke up from his sleep. He saw that the demons were trying to kill Lord Brahma. He fought with both the demons for 5,000 years. Goddess Mahamaya influenced the demons' minds as a result of which, they asked some boons from Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu granted the boons to them and said- 'Both of you will get killed by me.' The demons said- 'We are ready to get killed on the condition that you kill us only in such a place where there is no water.' As the whole earth was submerged in water, so the demons thought that Lord Vishnu would not be able to get a base to kill them. But Lord Vishnu severed their heads after making them sit on His thighs.

THE DESTRUCTION OF MAHISHASURA'S ARMY

Markandeya says- 'During ancient times, the deities and the demons fought a fierce battle which lasted for a hundred years. The deities were

defeated in this battle. Mahishasura drove out the deities from heaven and ascended the throne of Indra. The defeated deities went to seek the help of Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva. They narrated their woeful tale to all the three deities. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva became furious at the demons' cruelty. A powerful effulgence appeared from the mouth of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva. Similar effulgence appeared from the bodies of all the deities. The super effulgence was created from the unison of all these effulgence and a Goddess manifested from it. The deities were very pleased. All the deities presented their weapons to the Goddess. After this, they hailed her name in a loud voice by chanting- 'Victory be to her.' The Goddess laughed loudly. Her laughter shook the whole earth violently.

When Mahishasura heard her laughter, he proceeded towards her accompanied by a huge army. When he reached there, he was amazed at the appearance of the goddess. He attacked her with his army, which boasted of mighty warriors like Chamar, Chikshur, Udagra, Asilom, Mahahanu, Vashkal, Parivarit, Vidal and Kal. These demons had dangerous weapons like Tomar, Shakti, axe, mace etc. One by one, the Goddess destroyed all the demons' weapons and launched an attack on them. The deep exhalations made during the battle resulted into the creation of numerous Ganas. These Ganas joined the Goddess in the battle. Ultimately, the Goddess succeeded in killing all the demons.

The battlefield was covered by demons' corpses as well as carcasses of elephants and horses. The deities were pleased by the outcome of this battle.

THE DESTRUCTION OF MAHISHASURA'S ARMY

Markandeya says- 'During ancient times, the deities and the demons fought a fierce battle which lasted for a hundred years. The deities were defeated in this battle. Mahishasura drove out the deities from heaven and ascended the throne of Indra. The defeated deities went to seek the help of Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva. They narrated their woeful tale to all the three deities. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva became furious at the demons' cruelty. A powerful effulgence appeared from the mouth of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva. Similar effulgence appeared from the bodies of all the deities. The super effulgence was created from the unison of all these effulgence and a Goddess manifested from it. The deities were very pleased. All the deities presented their weapons to the Goddess. After this, they hailed her name in a loud voice by chanting- 'Victory be to her.' The Goddess laughed loudly. Her laughter shook the whole earth violently.

When Mahishasura heard her laughter, he proceeded towards her accompanied by a huge army. When he reached there, he was amazed at the appearance of the goddess. He attacked her with his army, which boasted of mighty warriors like Chamar, Chikshur, Udagra, Asilom, Mahahanu, Vashkal, Parivarit, Vidal and Kal. These demons had dangerous weapons like Tomar, Shakti, axe, mace etc. One by one, the Goddess destroyed all the demons' weapons and launched an attack on them. The deep exhalations made during the battle resulted into the creation of numerous Ganas. These Ganas joined the Goddess in the battle. Ultimately, the Goddess succeeded in killing all the demons.

The battlefield was covered by demons' corpses as well as carcasses of elephants and horses. The deities were pleased by the outcome of this battle.

THE DEITIES EULOGISE GODDESS BHAGVATI

Markandeya says- 'After the killing of Mahishasura, all the deities including Indra eulogised Goddess Bhagvati and said- 'We make

salutations to her who has manifested herself as a result of the unison of the powers of all the deities, one who is revered by all the deities and the sages. May she bless us. We make salutations to that Goddess whose powers are indescribable even by Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. O goddess! Please nurture the whole world with your love and care. We find ourselves incapable of describing your grandeur and magnificence.'

Goddess Bhagvati became very pleased with their devotion and asked them to demand any boon. But the deities replied- 'O goddess! By killing Mahishasura, you have already fulfilled our aspirations. If you really want to bless us, then please appear before us at the time of our need. The goddess blessed them by saying- 'So be it'.

Markandeya says- 'Now, I am going to tell you how Goddess Bhagvati protected the deities by killing the demons- Shumbh and Nishumbh.'

GODDESS PARVATI AND SHUMBH'S MESSENGER

Markandeya says- 'During ancient times, the demons- Shumbh and Nishumbh had captured all the three worlds after defeating the deities. The deities went to Goddess Parvati and eulogised her by saying- 'O goddess! You had promised us that you would come to our help at the time of our need. The time has arrived.'

As the deities were busy eulogising Goddess Parvati, she was preparing to go for her bath. She came near the deities and asked them as to who were they eulogising. Suddenly, a divine entity manifested from her body and answered on behalf of the deities- 'These deities are eulogising me.' This divine entity was none other than Goddess Shiva. As Shiva had manifested from the cell (Koshika) of Parvati's body, she was also known as Kaushiki. Kaushiki possessed divine beauty. The demons, Chand and Mund happened to see her.

Both of them went to Shumbh and described to him about Kaushiki's beauty. Shumbh wanted to marry her. He sent a messenger named Sugreev to Kaushiki to inform her about his intentions. Sugreev went to Kaushiki and said- 'You are so beautiful. You are fit to marry a mighty demon king like Shumbh who rules over all the three worlds.'

The goddess laughed and said- 'O messenger! I am ready to marry

Shumbh or Nishumbh because I know they are very powerful but there is one problem. As I have taken a vow that I would marry only such a person who defeats me in a battle.' The messenger replied- 'O beautiful lady! How can you fight the mighty Shumbh who has defeated even the deities and who is the master of all the three worlds?' Sugreev made persistent requests but the goddess refused to go along with him. She instructed him to inform Shumbh and Nishumbh about her vow.

THE DEITIES EULOGISE GODDESS BHAGVATI

Markandeya says- 'After the killing of Mahishasura, all the deities including Indra eulogised Goddess Bhagvati and said- 'We make salutations to her who has manifested herself as a result of the unison of the powers of all the deities, one who is revered by all the deities and the sages. May she bless us. We make salutations to that Goddess whose powers are indescribable even by Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. O goddess! Please nurture the whole world with your love and care. We find ourselves incapable of describing your grandeur and magnificence.'

Goddess Bhagvati became very pleased with their devotion and asked them to demand any boon. But the deities replied- 'O goddess! By killing Mahishasura, you have already fulfilled our aspirations. If you really want to bless us, then please appear before us at the time of our need. The goddess blessed them by saying- 'So be it'.

Markandeya says- 'Now, I am going to tell you how Goddess Bhagvati protected the deities by killing the demons- Shumbh and Nishumbh.'

GODDESS PARVATI AND SHUMBH'S MESSENGER

Markandeya says- 'During ancient times, the demons- Shumbh and Nishumbh had captured all the three worlds after defeating the deities. The deities went to Goddess Parvati and eulogised her by saying- 'O goddess! You had promised us that you would come to our help at the time of our need. The time has arrived.'

As the deities were busy eulogising Goddess Parvati, she was preparing to go for her bath. She came near the deities and asked them as to who were they eulogising. Suddenly, a divine entity manifested from her body and answered on behalf of the deities- 'These deities are eulogising me.' This divine entity was none other than Goddess Shiva. As Shiva had manifested from the cell (Koshika) of Parvati's body, she was also known as Kaushiki. Kaushiki possessed divine beauty. The demons, Chand and Mund happened to see her.

Both of them went to Shumbh and described to him about Kaushiki's beauty. Shumbh wanted to marry her. He sent a messenger named Sugreev to Kaushiki to inform her about his intentions. Sugreev went to Kaushiki and said- 'You are so beautiful. You are fit to marry a mighty demon king like Shumbh who rules over all the three worlds.'

The goddess laughed and said- 'O messenger! I am ready to marry Shumbh or Nishumbh because I know they are very powerful but there is one problem. As I have taken a vow that I would marry only such a person who defeats me in a battle.' The messenger replied- 'O beautiful lady! How can you fight the mighty Shumbh who has defeated even the deities and who is the master of all the three worlds?' Sugreev made persistent requests but the goddess refused to go along with him. She instructed him to inform Shumbh and Nishumbh about her vow.

KILLING OF DHUMRALOCHAN

Markandeya says- 'Sugreev went back to Shumbh and narrated the whole story. Shumbh became very furious and instructed Dhumralochan to

bring her by force. Dhumralochan went to Goddess Bhagvati accompanied by 60,000 demons. Initially, he requested her to come along with him. He also threatened to take her forcibly if she did not accept her proposal. Goddess Bhagvati refused to go along with him. Dhumralochan angrily ran towards her. The Goddess made a loud roar as a result of which, Dhumralochan's body was reduced to ashes. After his death, Dhumralochan's army attacked Goddess Bhagvati. The mount of the Goddess- Simha killed all the demons. When Shumbh got the news of Dhumralochan's death, his anger knew no bounds. He instructed Chand and Mund to go and bring Goddess Bhagvati after capturing her.

KILLING OF DHUMRALOCHAN

Markandeya says- 'Sugreev went back to Shumbh and narrated the whole story. Shumbh became very furious and instructed Dhumralochan to bring her by force. Dhumralochan went to Goddess Bhagvati accompanied by 60,000 demons. Initially, he requested her to come along with him. He also threatened to take her forcibly if she did not accept her proposal. Goddess Bhagvati refused to go along with him. Dhumralochan angrily ran towards her. The Goddess made a loud roar as a result of which, Dhumralochan's body was reduced to ashes. After his death, Dhumralochan's army attacked Goddess Bhagvati. The mount of the Goddess- Simha killed all the demons. When Shumbh got the news of Dhumralochan's death, his anger knew no bounds. He instructed Chand and Mund to go and bring Goddess Bhagvati after capturing her.

KILLING OF CHAND AND MUND

Chand and Mund proceeded with a huge army. At that time, Goddess Bhagvati had positioned herself at the peak of Himachal Mountain. She

was mounted on the back of Simha and was smiling sweetly. Chand and Mund tried to enslave her but suddenly, Goddess Kali appeared from her mouth and ferociously attacked the demons. She devoured some of them and killed the rest. After seeing his huge army vanquished, Chand angrily ran towards Goddess Kali. Mund attacked her with a range of arrows, which infuriated Goddess Kali and she pulled Chand by his hair and severed his head by a sword. Seeing him fall to the ground, Mund ran towards Goddess Kali but even he was killed. The rest of the army retreated. After killing Chand and Mund, Goddess Kali told Goddess Bhagvati- 'I have done my duty. I have killed Chand and Mund. Now you should do the same by killing Shumbh and Nishumbh.' Goddess Bhagvati replied- 'Since you have killed the demons, Chand and Mund from now onwards, you will also become famous as Chandika.'

KILLING OF CHAND AND MUND

Chand and Mund proceeded with a huge army. At that time, Goddess Bhagvati had positioned herself at the peak of Himachal Mountain. She was mounted on the back of Simha and was smiling sweetly. Chand and Mund tried to enslave her but suddenly, Goddess Kali appeared from her mouth and ferociously attacked the demons. She devoured some of them and killed the rest. After seeing his huge army vanquished, Chand angrily ran towards Goddess Kali. Mund attacked her with a range of arrows, which infuriated Goddess Kali and she pulled Chand by his hair and severed his head by a sword. Seeing him fall to the ground, Mund ran towards Goddess Kali but even he was killed. The rest of the army retreated. After killing Chand and Mund, Goddess Kali told Goddess Bhagvati- 'I have done my duty. I have killed Chand and Mund. Now you should do the same by killing Shumbh and Nishumbh.' Goddess Bhagvati replied- 'Since you have killed the demons, Chand and Mund from now onwards, you will also become famous as Chandika.'

KILLING OF RAKTABEEJ

Markandeya says- 'When Shumbh got the news of Chand and Mund's death, he became very furious. He proceeded to fight Goddess Bhagvati

accompanied by numerous mighty warriors like Udayudh, Kambu, Kotiveerya, Dhumravanashajat, Kalak, Kalkeya etc. When Goddess Chandika saw them coming, she made a loud sound by pulling the bowstring. The demons came near and surrounded Goddess Chandika and Goddess Bhagvati from all the sides. Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu became anxious. They created divine entities with the help of effulgence emanating from their bodies. These divine entities resembled Goddess Chandika. They instructed these divine entities to kill all the demons. Goddess Chandika requested Lord Shiva to approach Shumbh and Nishumbh as her messenger and inform him that they should either take refuge in the Patal loka or be ready to die. Lord Mahadeva went to the place where Katyayani was fighting the demons. The demons attacked her with different weapons but Chandika gave them a befitting reply. Unable to face the assault of the goddesses, the demons started fleeing. Seeing this, Raktabeej came forward to fight. Raktabeej was blessed with a boon that was if a single drop of his blood fell on the ground, this drop would create another form of his. This way, in a very short time, thousands of Raktabeej as covered the battlefield. The deities became afraid.

Seeing the frightened deities, Bhagvati said to Kali- 'O Chamunda! Open your mouth and drink each drop of blood coming out from the injuries of Raktabeej.' After saying this, Goddess Bhagvati attacked Raktabeej with her trident. Goddess Kali drank all the blood coming out from his wound. At last, Raktabeej was killed. The deities were pleased. Goddess Kali started to dance with ferocity due to the intoxication caused by drinking of the blood.

KILLING OF RAKTABEEJ

Markandeya says- 'When Shumbh got the news of Chand and Mund' s death, he became very furious. He proceeded to fight Goddess Bhagvati accompanied by numerous mighty warriors like Udayudh, Kambu, Kotiveerya, Dhumravanashajat, Kalak, Kalkeya etc. When Goddess Chandika saw them coming, she made a loud sound by pulling the bowstring. The demons came near and surrounded Goddess Chandika and Goddess Bhagvati from all the sides. Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu became anxious. They created divine entities with the help of effulgence emanating from their bodies. These divine entities resembled Goddess Chandika. They instructed these divine entities to kill all the demons. Goddess Chandika requested Lord Shiva to approach Shumbh and Nishumbh as her messenger and inform him that they should either take refuge in the Patal loka or be ready to die. Lord Mahadeva went to the place where Katyayani was fighting the demons. The demons attacked her with different weapons but Chandika gave them a befitting reply. Unable to face the assault of the goddesses, the demons started fleeing. Seeing this, Raktabeej came forward to fight. Raktabeej was blessed with a boon that was if a single drop of his blood fell on the ground, this drop would create another form of his. This way, in a very short time, thousands of Raktabeejas covered the battlefield. The deities became afraid.

Seeing the frightened deities, Bhagvati said to Kali- 'O Chamunda! Open your mouth and drink each drop of blood coming out from the injuries of Raktabeej.' After saying this, Goddess Bhagvati attacked Raktabeej with her trident. Goddess Kali drank all the blood coming out from his wound. At last, Raktabeej was killed. The deities were pleased. Goddess Kali started to dance with ferocity due to the intoxication caused by drinking of the blood.

KILLING OF NISHUMBH

Markandeya says- 'When Shumbh and Nishumbh heard about Raktabeej's death, they were infuriated. Nishumbh attacked the goddess

with a huge army. Shumbh attacked from the other side. In the fierce battle, Goddess Bhagvati broke the sword as well as the shield of Nishumbh. Nishumbh then attacked Goddess Bhagvati with his weapon-Shakti. Goddess Bhagvati broke it with her Chakra. At last, she attacked him with her arrows at him and as a result, Nishumbh got injured and fell.'

When Shumbh saw Nishumbh, injured and unconscious, he ran towards Goddess Bhagvati to kill her. Goddess Bhagvati blew her conch and made a thunderous noise by pulling the bowstring. Shumbh released the dangerous weapon- Ugradipti in the direction of Goddess Bhagvati. But her weapon Maholkanamni destroyed it. Shumbh thundered loudly and attacked Goddess Bhagvati with a volley of arrows but none could cause any harm to her. Finally, Goddess Bhagvati attacked Shumbh with her trident. Shumbh fell down unconscious. After sometime, he regained his consciousness and attacked Goddess Bhagvati with his arrows. But she destroyed all the arrows. In the meantime, Nishumbh had regained his consciousness. He got up and attacked Goddess Bhagvati with his trident. In the end, Goddess Bhagvati killed Nishumbh by piercing her trident in his heart. As Nishumbh was dying, an another demon manifested from his body. Even he was killed by her. Her mount Simha devoured all the dead demons.

KILLING OF NISHUMBH

Markandeya says- 'When Shumbh and Nishumbh heard about Raktabeej's death, they were infuriated. Nishumbh attacked the goddess with a huge army. Shumbh attacked from the other side. In the fierce battle, Goddess Bhagvati broke the sword as well as the shield of Nishumbh. Nishumbh then attacked Goddess Bhagvati with his weapon- Shakti. Goddess Bhagvati broke it with her Chakra. At last, she attacked him with her arrows at him and as a result, Nishumbh got injured and fell. '

When Shumbh saw Nishumbh, injured and unconscious, he ran towards Goddess Bhagvati to kill her. Goddess Bhagvati blew her conch and made a thunderous noise by pulling the bowstring. Shumbh released the dangerous weapon- Ugradipti in the direction of Goddess Bhagvati. But her weapon Maholkanamni destroyed it. Shumbh thundered loudly and attacked Goddess Bhagvati with a volley of arrows but none could cause any harm to her. Finally, Goddess Bhagvati attacked Shumbh with her trident. Shumbh fell down unconscious. After sometime, he regained his consciousness and attacked Goddess Bhagvati with his arrows. But she destroyed all the arrows. In the meantime, Nishumbh had regained his consciousness. He got up and attacked Goddess Bhagvati with his trident. In the end, Goddess Bhagvati killed Nishumbh by piercing her trident in his heart. As Nishumbh was dying, an another demon manifested from his body. Even he was killed by her. Her mount Simha devoured all the dead demons.

KILLING OF SHUMBH

Markandeya says- 'Shumbh became angry at the death of his brother- Nishumbh. He furiously told the goddess- 'O wicked lady! Do not be

proud of your strength borrowed from others.' Goddess Bhagvati replied- 'O wicked demon! I am the only power of this whole universe. I am the origin of cause and effect. Look! All the divinities are entering into my body.'

The next moment, all the divine entities, which had earlier manifested from the bodies of the deities united with the goddess. Now, the goddess was alone. A tremendous battle was fought between Goddess Bhagvati and Shumbh. Ambika attacked him with numerous divine weapons. But, Shumbh neutralised her attack with his own weapons.

Shumbh covered the whole body of Goddess Bhagvati with his arrows. She broke his bow. After this, Shumbh attacked her with his weapon named Shakti, which was broken into pieces by her Chakra. Now, Shumbh took out his sword and attacked her with it. She broke his shield and sword with her arrows. Shumbh then attacked her with his mace. Even his mace was broken into pieces.

Shumbh had no more weapons left with him. He attacked the goddess on her breast with his clenched fist. She slapped him on his face because of which he fell down. The next moment, he got up and manifested himself in the sky. Now, a tremendous duel was fought between them in the sky.

In the end, she dashed him on the ground and pierced the trident in his heart. Shumbh was instantly killed. After the killing of Shumbh, all the deities became pleased. The Gandharvas and the deities rejoiced. The Apsaras danced. The whole atmosphere echoed with the sound- 'Shanti Shanti' (Let there be peace).

KILLING OF SHUMBH

Markandeya says- 'Shumbh became angry at the death of his brother- Nishumbh. He furiously told the goddess- 'O wicked lady! Do not be proud of your strength borrowed from others.' Goddess Bhagvati replied- 'O wicked demon! I am the only power of this whole universe. I am the origin of cause and effect. Look! All the divinities are entering into my body.'

The next moment, all the divine entities, which had earlier manifested from the bodies of the deities united with the goddess. Now, the goddess was alone. A tremendous battle was fought between Goddess Bhagvati and Shumbh. Ambika attacked him with numerous divine weapons. But, Shumbh neutralised her attack with his own weapons.

Shumbh covered the whole body of Goddess Bhagvati with his arrows. She broke his bow. After this, Shumbh attacked her with his weapon named Shakti, which was broken into pieces by her Chakra. Now, Shumbh took out his sword and attacked her with it. She broke his shield and sword with her arrows. Shumbh then attacked her with his mace. Even his mace was broken into pieces.

Shumbh had no more weapons left with him. He attacked the goddess on her breast with his clenched fist. She slapped him on his face because of which he fell down. The next moment, he got up and manifested himself in the sky. Now, a tremendous duel was fought between them in the sky.

In the end, she dashed him on the ground and pierced the trident in his heart. Shumbh was instantly killed. After the killing of Shumbh, all the deities became pleased. The Gandharvas and the deities rejoiced. The Apsaras danced. The whole atmosphere echoed with the sound- 'Shanti Shanti' (Let there be peace).

DEVI STOTRA

Markandeya says- After goddess Bhagvati had killed Shumbh, all the deities under the leadership of Indra and Agni started eulogising her- 'O

Goddess! Be pleased up on us! Protect the whole world, as you are the goddess of this whole universe. You appear in the form of this earth- the base on which everything is situated. Your light illuminates all the living creatures. You are the only power through which creation, nurturing and annihilation takes place. You are the Brahmani, Maheshwari and the Kaumari. We salute you because you have protected us from the terror of the demons. We need your protection from all the calamities of this world.'

Goddess Bhagvati was extremely pleased by their eulogy. She asked them for any wish. The deities said- 'O Akhileshwari! We need your protection. Clear all the obstacles from our path. Eliminate our enemies.'

Goddess Bhagvati replied- 'During Vaivasvat Manavantar, I will take incarnation from Yashoda's womb- the wife of Nand, to kill the demons Shumbh and Nishumbh. After that, I will kill the demon- Vaiprachit in my most aggressive form. One hundred years later, I will manifest myself and would be known as Satakshi because of my hundred eyes. My next incarnation would be known as Shakambhari because I would nurture the whole world during the period of drought. I will kill the demon Durgam during that drought period. I will kill the demon Arun- the tormentor of all the three worlds by appearing in the form of a bee. Due to this, I will be known as Bhramari. I will take incarnations every time the demons torment the world.

DEVI STOTRA

Markandeya says- After goddess Bhagvati had killed Shumbh, all the deities under the leadership of Indra and Agni started eulogising her- 'O Goddess! Be pleased up on us! Protect the whole world, as you are the goddess of this whole universe. You appear in the form of this earth- the base on which everything is situated. Your light illuminates all the living creatures. You are the only power through which creation, nurturing and annihilation takes place. You are the Brahmani, Maheshwari and the Kaumari. We salute you because you have protected us from the terror of the demons. We need your protection from all the calamities of this world.'

Goddess Bhagvati was extremely pleased by their eulogy. She asked them for any wish. The deities said- 'O Akhileshwari! We need your protection. Clear all the obstacles from our path. Eliminate our enemies.'

Goddess Bhagvati replied- 'During Vaivasvat Manavantar, I will take incarnation from Yashoda's womb- the wife of Nand, to kill the demons Shumbh and Nishumbh. After that, I will kill the demon- Vaiprachit in my most aggressive form. One hundred years later, I will manifest myself and would be known as Satakshi because of my hundred eyes. My next incarnation would be known as Shakambhari because I would nurture the whole world during the period of drought. I will kill the demon Durgam during that drought period. I will kill the demon Arun- the tormentor of all the three worlds by appearing in the form of a bee. Due to this, I will be known as Bhramari. I will take incarnations every time the demons torment the world.

GODDESS BHAGVATI BLESSES THE DEITIES

Goddess Bhagvati says- I will clear all the obstacles from the path of such a man who worships me. A devotee who listens to the great tales of how I

killed Mahishasura, Shumbh and Nishumbh, on the eighth, ninth and fourteenth days of any month, would be liberated from all sins and poverty. He would become free from fear. A devotee must listen to my divine tales during all the religious ceremonies like making sacrifice, worship and performing Yagya. By doing this, all his enemies will be eliminated. A man who remembers me when faced with dangerous situation remains protected by me.'

After blessing the deities, Goddess Bhagvati disappeared from their sight. All the demons, which had survived after the killings of Shumbh and Nishumbh, went to the nether world to save their lives.

GODDESS BHAGVATI BLESSES THE DEITIES

Goddess Bhagvati says- I will clear all the obstacles from the path of such a man who worships me. A devotee who listens to the great tales of how I killed Mahishasura, Shumbh and Nishumbh, on the eighth, ninth and fourteenth days of any month, would be liberated from all sins and poverty. He would become free from fear. A devotee must listen to my divine tales during all the religious ceremonies like making sacrifice, worship and performing Yagya. By doing this, all his enemies will be eliminated. A man who remembers me when faced with dangerous situation remains protected by me.'

After blessing the deities, Goddess Bhagvati disappeared from their sight. All the demons, which had survived after the killings of Shumbh and Nishumbh, went to the nether world to save their lives.

GODDESS BHAGVATI BLESSES SURATH AND THE VAISHYA

The sage says- 'O king! I have described in detail about the greatness of Goddess Bhagvati who is the creator of this universe. She is the one who

bestows the knowledge of self to us. She is the Maya (illusion) by whom the whole world is influenced. You must take her refuge. You can achieve all the pleasures of this world, heaven, as well as liberation.' King Surath and the Vaishya went to do their penance. While doing their penance, they chanted the mantras of Devi Sukta. They made an earthen idol of Bhagvati and worshipped it by offering flowers, Dhup etc. They did an austere penance for three years implying various modes of worship. Sometimes, they observed fast, the other time, they offered their own blood to please Goddess Bhagvati. At last, the goddess was pleased and appeared before them. She said- 'I am pleased with both of you. I will fulfil whatever you wish.' King Surath sought her blessings in regaining his kingdom from the clutches of his enemies. He also requested her to bless him with an undivided kingdom in his next life. The Vaishya requested her to make him free from all kinds of attachments. Goddess Bhagvati said- 'O king! Very soon, you will be able to regain your whole kingdom from your enemies. In your next birth, you would be bom as Savarni Manu, the son of Surya. You will also attain self-knowledge and become free from all kinds of attachments.' After blessing both of them, Goddess Bhagvati disappeared.

GODDESS BHAGVATI BLESSES SURATH AND THE VAISHYA

The sage says- 'O king! I have described in detail about the greatness of Goddess Bhagvati who is the creator of this universe. She is the one who bestows the knowledge of self to us. She is the Maya (illusion) by whom the whole world is influenced. You must take her refuge. You can achieve all the pleasures of this world, heaven, as well as liberation.' King Surath and the Vaishya went to do their penance. While doing their penance, they chanted the mantras of Devi Sukta. They made an earthen idol of Bhagvati and worshipped it by offering flowers, Dhup etc. They did an austere penance for three years implying various modes of worship. Sometimes, they observed fast, the other time, they offered their own blood to please Goddess Bhagvati. At last, the goddess was pleased and appeared before them. She said- 'I am pleased with both of you. I will fulfil whatever you wish.' King Surath sought her blessings in regaining his kingdom from the clutches of his enemies. He also requested her to bless him with an undivided kingdom in his next life. The Vaishya requested her to make him free from all kinds of attachments. Goddess Bhagvati said- 'O king! Very soon, you will be able to regain your whole kingdom from your enemies. In your next birth, you would be born as Savarni Manu, the son of Surya. You will also attain self-knowledge and become free from all kinds of attachments.' After blessing both of them, Goddess Bhagvati disappeared.

SAVARN MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- O great sage! Now I am going to tell you about the Manavantar of Savarn, which will be the ninth Manavantar. Savarn was

the son of Daksha. During this Manavantar, there will be three prominent groups of deities. Each group would comprise of twelve deities. During this Manavantar, Indra would be known as Adbhut. The names of the Saptarishis of this Manavantar would be Medhatithi, Vasu, Satya, Jyotishman, Dyutiman, Sabal and Hatyavahan. Savarn will have eight sons- Dhrishtketu, Barhaketu, Panchahasta, Niramay, Prithushravah, Achishman, Bhuridruymna and Bhrihadmay.'

The tenth Manavantar will be named after the tenth Manasputra of Lord Brahma. During this Manavantar, the names of two prominent groups of deities will be Sukhasin and Niruddha. The total population during this Manavantar will be hundred people. The total number of deities during this Manavantar will also be of the same number. The name of Indra during this tenth Manavantar would be Shanti and the names of the Saptarishis during this tenth Manavantar would be Apomurti, Havishman, Sukrit, Satya, Nabhag, Apratim and Vashishta. The tenth Manu would have ten sons- Sukshetra, Uttamoja, Bhurishen, Veeryavan, Shatanik, Vrishabh, Anmitra, Jayadrath, Bhuridruymna and Suparva.

The eleventh Manavantar will be named after Savarn, the son of Dharma. During this Manavantar, there will be three prominent groups of deities- Vihangam, Kamag and Nirmanpati. Each group would comprise of 30 deities. Indra would be known by the name of Vrishakhya. The name of the Saptarishis of this Manavantar would be Havishman, Varishtha, Nischar, Anagh, Vishti, Agnidev etc. The eleventh Manu would have six sons- Sarvatrag, Susharma, Devaneek, Purudwaha, Hemdhanva and Dhridhayu.

The twelfth Manavantar will be named after Savarn, the son of Rudra. The names of the five prominent groups of deities of this Manavantar will be Sudharma, Sumana, Harit, Rohit and Suvam. Each group will comprise of ten deities. During this Manavantar, Indra would be known by the name of Kratadhama. The names of the Saptarishis during this Manavantar would be Dyuti, Tapasvi, Sutava, Tapomurti, Taponidhi, Taporati and Tapodhiti. The Manu of this Manavantar would have six sons- Devavan, Upadev, Devashrestha, Vidurath, Mitravan and Mitravinda.

Rauchya would be the Manu during the thirteen Manavantar. Three

prominent groups of deities would be Sudharma, Sukarma and Susharma. During this Manavantar, Indra would be known by the name of Divaspati. The name of the Saptarishis of this Manavantar will be Dhritiman, Avyay, Tatvadarshi, Nirutsuk, Nirmoha, Sutapa and Nishkamp. During this Manavantar, Manu would have eight sons- Chitrasen, Vichitra, Niyati, Nirbhay, Dhridh, Sunetra, Kshatrabuddhi and Suvrat.

SAVARN MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'O great sage! Now I am going to tell you about the Manavantar of Savarn, which will be the ninth Manavantar. Savarn was the son of Daksha. During this Manavantar, there will be three prominent groups of deities. Each group would comprise of twelve deities. During this Manavantar, Indra would be known as Adbhut. The names of the Saptarishis of this Manavantar would be Medhatithi, Vasu, Satya, Jyotishman, Dyutiman, Sabal and Hatyavahan. Savarn will have eight sons- Dhrishtketu, Barhaketu, Panchahasta, Niramay, Prithushravah, Achishman, Bhuridruymna and Bhrihadmay.'

The tenth Manavantar will be named after the tenth Manasputra of Lord Brahma. During this Manavantar, the names of two prominent groups of deities will be Sukhasin and Niruddha. The total population during this Manavantar will be hundred people. The total number of deities during this Manavantar will also be of the same number. The name of Indra during this tenth Manavantar would be Shanti and the names of the Saptarishis during this tenth Manavantar would be Apomurti, Havishman, Sukrit, Satya, Nabhag, Apratim and Vashishta. The tenth Manu would have ten sons- Sukshetra, Uttamoja, Bhurishen, Veeryavan, Shatanik, Vrishabh, Anmitra, Jayadrath, Bhuridruymna and Suparva.

The eleventh Manavantar will be named after Savarn, the son of Dharma. During this Manavantar, there will be three prominent groups of deities- Vihangam, Kamag and Nirmanpati. Each group would comprise of 30 deities. Indra would be known by the name of Vrishakhya. The name of the Saptarishis of this Manavantar would be Havishman, Varishtha, Nischar, Anagh, Vishti, Agnidev etc. The eleventh Manu would have six sons- Sarvatrag, Susharma, Devaneek, Purudwaha, Hemdhanva and Dhridhayu.

The twelfth Manavantar will be named after Savarn, the son of Rudra. The names of the five prominent groups of deities of this Manavantar will be Sudharma, Sumana, Harit, Rohit and Suvarn. Each group will comprise of ten deities. During this Manavantar, Indra would be known by the name of Kratadhama. The names of the Saptarishis during this Manavantar would be Dyuti, Tapasvi, Sutava, Tapomurti, Taponidhi, Taporati and Tapodhiti. The Manu of this Manavantar would have six sons- Devavan, Upadev, Devashrestha, Vidurath, Mitravan and Mitravinda.

Rauchya would be the Manu during the thirteen Manavantar. Three prominent groups of deities would be Sudharma, Sukarma and Susharma. During this Manavantar, Indra would be known by the name of Divaspati. The name of the Saptarishis of this Manavantar will be Dhritiman, Avyay, Tatvadarshi, Nirutsuk, Nirmoha, Sutapa and Nishkamp. During this Manavantar, Manu would have eight sons- Chitrasen, Vichitra, Niyati, Nirbhay, Dhridh, Sunetra, Kshatrabuddhi and Suvrat.

RAUCHYA MANYANTAR

RUCHI ADVISED TO GET MARRIED

Markandeya says- 'As soon as the ancestors departed, a beautiful Apsara came near Ruchi. Her name was Pramalocha. She said to him- 'O great sage! I have a daughter named Malini. The name of my husband is Pushkar. I want to get her betrothed to you. Please accept her as your wife. In course of time, she would give birth to Manu.

Ruchi accepted her proposal. Ruchi married Malini in the presence of sages. In course of time, Malini gave birth to a son who was named Rauchya. Rauchya Manavantar was named after him.

Markandeya says- 'During ancient times, the ancestors of Ruchi were not pleased by his unmarried status. He was a sage of high degree and used to have food once a day. The ancestors asked him- 'O son! Why didn't you get married? Grihastha ashrama holds a very important place in the life of a man. It is only after paying his three debts (rina) that a man is entitled to become a householder. All your efforts in paying off your debts towards the deities and ancestors are useless unless you are married. Your aspirations of attaining the supreme abode would go in vain unless you have become a father.'

Ruchi replied- 'Getting married is the root cause of all sorrows. It also obstructs the upward spiritual movement of a man. That is why I am not having any interest in getting married. Having self control helps a man to attain salvation.'

The ancestors said- 'The path you have chosen would never lead you towards salvation. A man reaps the fruits of his Karmas committed in his previous lives in the form of happiness and sorrow. An intelligent man must act in such a manner that his soul remains aloof from his Karmas.'

Ruchi replied- 'The path of actions (Karma) has been described as an Avidya in the Vedas. Why are you pushing me towards that path?' The ancestors replied- 'It is true what you have said. But at the same time, it can be proved wrong by one's Karmas because Karmas are the means by which a man attains self-knowledge. Your belief that your actions are purifying your soul is based on false notions. Actually, by not doing your Karma, you are only torturing your soul. Karma is very beneficial for a man's upliftment. So, you must get married to enjoy a blissful life.'

Ruchi replied- 'O great ancestors! Who will give his daughter to a poor and an old man like me?' The ancestors warned Ruchi that if he went against their wishes, he would face degradation in every sphere of his life. After saying this, the ancestors disappeared.

RUCHI ADVISED TO GET MARRIED

Markandeya says- 'As soon as the ancestors departed, a beautiful Apsara came near Ruchi. Her name was Pramalocha. She said to him- 'O great sage! I have a daughter named Malini. The name of my husband is Pushkar. I want to get her betrothed to you. Please accept her as your wife. In course of time, she would give birth to Manu.

Ruchi accepted her proposal. Ruchi married Malini in the presence of sages. In course of time, Malini gave birth to a son who was named Rauchya. Rauchya Manavantar was named after him.

Markandeya says- 'During ancient times, the ancestors of Ruchi were not pleased by his unmarried status. He was a sage of high degree and used to have food once a day. The ancestors asked him- 'O son! Why didn't you get married? Grihastha ashrama holds a very important place in the life of a man. It is only after paying his three debts (rina) that a man is entitled to become a householder. All your efforts in paying off your debts towards the deities and ancestors are useless unless you are married. Your aspirations of attaining the supreme abode would go in vain unless you have become a father.'

Ruchi replied- 'Getting married is the root cause of all sorrows. It also obstructs the upward spiritual movement of a man. That is why I am not having any interest in getting married. Having self control helps a man to attain salvation.'

The ancestors said- 'The path you have chosen would never lead you towards salvation. A man reaps the fruits of his Karmas committed in his previous lives in the form of happiness and sorrow. An intelligent man must act in such a manner that his soul remains aloof from his Karmas.'

Ruchi replied- 'The path of actions (Karma) has been described as an Avidya in the Vedas. Why are you pushing me towards that path?' The ancestors replied- 'It is true what you have said. But at the same time, it can be proved wrong by one's Karmas because Karmas are the means by which a man attains self-knowledge. Your belief that your actions are purifying your soul is based on false notions. Actually, by not doing your Karma, you are only torturing your soul. Karma is very beneficial for a man's upliftment. So, you must get married to enjoy a blissful life.'

Ruchi replied- 'O great ancestors! Who will give his daughter to a poor and an old man like me?' The ancestors warned Ruchi that if he went against their wishes, he would face degradation in every sphere of his life. After saying this, the ancestors disappeared.

RUCHI EULOGISES HIS ANCESTORS WHO BLESS HIM

Markandeya says- 'After the departure of his ancestors, Ruchi started wandering here and there in his restlessness. After sometime, when he regained his composure, he decided to do penance to please Lord Brahma. His penance continued for one hundred years. After the accomplishment of his penance, Lord Brahma appeared before him and asked what he desired. Ruchi expressed his desire of getting married as per the aspirations of his ancestors. Lord Brahma blessed him and also instructed Ruchi to eulogise his ancestors so that his wishes could be fulfilled.'

Ruchi eulogised his ancestors by chanting Stotras- 'I make salutations to my ancestors who preside over the ceremony of Shradha, who are pacified even by the deities, by the chanting of Swaha, made during the ceremony of Shradha. I make salutations to my ancestors who dwell in the space and in the heaven. May my ancestors accept the offerings, which I am making in the form of flowers, cereals, water, Dhup etc.'

Markandeya says- 'Hardly had Ruchi accomplished his eulogy of the ancestors, a very bright effulgence appeared in front of him, who were in fact his ancestors. They said- 'Demand any boon.' Ruchi replied- 'Lord Brahma has instructed me to enhance the process of creation. So I need a wife for that purpose. The ancestors said- 'Here at this very place, you will find a very beautiful wife. She would give birth to Rauchya. You too would become very famous as Prajapati because of your numerous sons and you will attain salvation in the end.' After blessing Ruchi, the ancestors departed for heaven.

RUCHI EULOGISES HIS ANCESTORS WHO BLESS HIM

Markandeya says- 'After the departure of his ancestors, Ruchi started wandering here and there in his restlessness. After sometime, when he regained his composure, he decided to do penance to please Lord Brahma. His penance continued for one hundred years. After the accomplishment of his penance, Lord Brahma appeared before him and asked what he desired. Ruchi expressed his desire of getting married as per the aspirations of his ancestors. Lord Brahma blessed him and also instructed Ruchi to eulogise his ancestors so that his wishes could be fulfilled.'

Ruchi eulogised his ancestors by chanting Stotras- 'I make salutations to my ancestors who preside over the ceremony of Shradha, who are pacified even by the deities, by the chanting of Swaha, made during the ceremony of Shradha. I make salutations to my ancestors who dwell in the space and in the heaven. May my ancestors accept the offerings, which I am making in the form of flowers, cereals, water, Dhup etc.'

Markandeya says- 'Hardly had Ruchi accomplished his eulogy of the ancestors, a very bright effulgence appeared in front of him, who were in fact his ancestors. They said- 'Demand any boon.' Ruchi replied- 'Lord Brahma has instructed me to enhance the process of creation. So I need a wife for that purpose. The ancestors said- 'Here at this very place, you will find a very beautiful wife. She would give birth to Rauchya. You too would become very famous as Prajapati because of your numerous sons and you will attain salvation in the end.' After blessing Ruchi, the ancestors departed for heaven.

THE BEGINNING OF BHAUTYA MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'Now I am going to tell you about the origin of Bhautya Manavantar. Sage Angira had a disciple named Bhuti. He was short

tempered in nature and used to curse anybody at the earliest opportunity. Everybody including the deities like Indra, Vayu, Surya etc. were scared of him. Nobody went against his wishes and followed his commands.'

Bhuti had no children and commenced a rigorous penance to achieve one. But still, his aspiration remained unfulfilled. He decided to quit doing penance. His brother named Suvarcha invited him to the Yagya he was performing. Bhuti left the hermitage after entrusting his disciple-Shanti to look after its affairs.

Shanti tried his best to perform his duties according to the instructions of his teacher- Bhuti. Yet, one day, the sacrificial fire got extinguished somehow. Shanti became scared at the prospect of facing his preceptor's wrath. He was certain of being cursed by Bhuti. Finding no other option, he went to Agni named Jativeda and sought his help. He tried to please him by chanting Agni Stotra. He eulogised Agni in many ways. He said- 'O Agni! The first of all creations, I need your blessings. Without you, the Yagya cannot be performed. All the Vedas are full of praise for you. The deities as well as the demons try to pacify you by making offerings to you.'

The deity Agni became extremely pleased by Shanti's eulogy and appeared before him. He asked Shanti to express his desire. Shanti requested Agni to re-ignite the sacrificial fire, which had gone off, so that he does not have to face the wrath of his Guru. He then requested Agni to bless his Guru with a son having all the good qualities. Agni was very much pleased by Shanti's devotion towards his Guru. He said- 'Your Guru Bhuti would have a son named Bhautya after whom the Manavantar would be named.' After blessing him, Agni disappeared.

Shanti returned to his hermitage and was very pleased to see the sacrificial fire burning. In the meantime, his Guru Bhuti arrived. His Guru was very pleased with the sincerity of Shanti with which he performed his duties in his absence. Bhuti said- 'O son! I don't understand the reason why my heart is overwhelmed with love. Love is alien to my nature. If you are cognisant of the reason, please tell me.' Then Shanti narrated the whole story. Bhuti was very pleased by his devotion. He taught all the Vedas to Shanti.

In course of time, Bhautya was bom to him. He was the Manu of the

Bhautya Manavantar. During this Manavantar, there would be five prominent groups of deities- Chakshush, Kanishth, Pavitra, Bhrajir and Dharavrit. During this Manavantar, Indra would be known as Shuchi. The names of the Saptarishis would be Agnigh, Agnibahu, Suchi, Mukt, Madhav, Shukra and Ajit. Bhautya Manu would have ten sons- Guh, Gambhir, Brahna, Bharata, Anugraha, Srimani, Prateer, Vishnu, Sankraman and Subal. A man who listens to the tales of all the fourteen Manvantaras is not only blessed but becomes liberated from all his sins.

THE BEGINNING OF BHAUTYA MANVANTAR

Markandeya says- 'Now I am going to tell you about the origin of Bhautya Manavantar. Sage Angira had a disciple named Bhuti. He was short tempered in nature and used to curse anybody at the earliest opportunity. Everybody including the deities like Indra, Vayu, Surya etc. were scared of him. Nobody went against his wishes and followed his commands.'

Bhuti had no children and commenced a rigorous penance to achieve one. But still, his aspiration remained unfulfilled. He decided to quit doing penance. His brother named Suvarcha invited him to the Yagya he was performing. Bhuti left the hermitage after entrusting his disciple- Shanti to look after its affairs.

Shanti tried his best to perform his duties according to the instructions of his teacher- Bhuti. Yet, one day, the sacrificial fire got extinguished somehow. Shanti became scared at the prospect of facing his preceptor's wrath. He was certain of being cursed by Bhuti. Finding no other option, he went to Agni named Jativeda and sought his help. He tried to please him by chanting Agni Stotra. He eulogised Agni in many ways. He said- 'O Agni! The first of all creations, I need your blessings. Without you, the Yagya cannot be performed. All the Vedas are full of praise for you. The deities as well as the demons try to pacify you by making offerings to you.'

The deity Agni became extremely pleased by Shanti's eulogy and appeared before him. He asked Shanti to express his desire. Shanti requested Agni to re-ignite the sacrificial fire, which had gone off, so that he does not have to face the wrath of his Guru. He then requested Agni to bless his Guru with a son having all the good qualities. Agni was very much pleased by Shanti's devotion towards his Guru. He said- 'Your Guru Bhuti would have a son named Bhautya after whom the Manavantar would be named.' After blessing him, Agni disappeared.

Shanti returned to his hermitage and was very pleased to see the sacrificial fire burning. In the meantime, his Guru Bhuti arrived. His Guru was very pleased with the sincerity of Shanti with which he performed his duties in his absence. Bhuti said- 'O son! I don't understand the reason why my heart is overwhelmed with love. Love is alien to my nature. If you are cognisant of the reason, please tell me.' Then Shanti narrated the whole story. Bhuti was very pleased by his devotion. He taught all the Vedas to Shanti.

In course of time, Bhautya was born to him. He was the Manu of the Bhautya Manavantar. During this Manavantar, there would be five prominent groups of deities- Chakshush, Kanishth, Pavitra, Bhrajir and Dharavrit. During this Manavantar, Indra would be known as Shuchi. The names of the Saptarishis would be Agnigh, Agnibahu, Suchi, Mukt, Madhav, Shukra and Ajit. Bhautya Manu would have ten sons- Guh, Gambhir, Brahna, Bharata, Anugraha, Srimani, Prateer, Vishnu, Sankraman and Subal. A man who listens to the tales of all the fourteen Manvantaras is not only blessed but becomes liberated from all his sins.

BIRTH OF MARTANDADEV

Lord Brahma had created Daksha from the thumb of his right hand. Daksha's wife was created from the thumb of Brahma's left hand. Daksha

had a daughter named Aditi. Martandadev was the son of Aditi and his father was Kashyapa.

Kraustuki asked- 'O lord! Why did Vivasvan Surya took birth as the son of Kashyapa.'

Markandeya says- 'During the initial phase of creation, when nothing existed, except a large egg. Lord Brahma manifested inside that egg. Subsequently, he came out from that egg. At that time, a loud sound of OM came out from his mouth. From this sound of Omkar, were created Bhur, Bhuvah and in the end Swah. These three mystic words are the forms of Surya. After that, three more mystic words were created- Mahah, Jan and Tapah, each of the former word being grosser than the latter one. In the end, the word Satya was created, which was the grossest of all. These seven mystic words related with the Omkar illustrate the gross and the subtle forms of Vivasvan.

BIRTH OF MARTANDADEV

Lord Brahma had created Daksha from the thumb of his right hand. Daksha's wife was created from the thumb of Brahma's left hand. Daksha had a daughter named Aditi. Martandadev was the son of Aditi and his father was Kashyapa.

Kraustuki asked- 'O lord! Why did Vivasvan Surya took birth as the son of Kashyapa.'

Markandeya says- 'During the initial phase of creation, when nothing existed, except a large egg. Lord Brahma manifested inside that egg. Subsequently, he came out from that egg. At that time, a loud sound of OM came out from his mouth. From this sound of Omkar, were created Bhur, Bhuvah and in the end Swah. These three mystic words are the forms of Surya. After that, three more mystic words were created- Mahah, Jan and Tapah, each of the former word being grosser than the latter one. In the end, the word Satya was created, which was the grossest of all. These seven mystic words related with the Omkar illustrate the gross and the subtle forms of Vivasvan.

MANIFESTATION OF THE SUN GOD ADITYA AND THE VEDAS

Markandeya says- 'After Brahma came out from that egg, Rigveda manifested from his first mouth. From the mouth facing south,

manifested the Yajurveda. After that, Samaveda manifested from his mouth facing west. In the end, Atharvaveda came out from the mouth facing north. The Rigveda symbolises the Rajo Guna while the Yajurveda symbolises the Satva Guna. Samaveda comprises of Tamo Guna whereas Atharvaveda is the mixture of Satva and Tamo Guna. The manifestation of the Vedas had illuminated the whole atmosphere. But the manifestation of Omkar overlapped their radiance and covered all the Vedas. At last, the radiance of the Vedas got united with that of the Omkar. The Rigveda symbolises the form of Brahma during the period of creation while Yajurveda symbolises Lord Vishnu during the whole period of nurturing. Samaveda is symbolical of Rudra at the time of annihilation.

Markandeya says- 'In the beginning of the creation, Surya shed unbearable amount of heat. This made the process of creation very difficult. Lord Brahma became worried. He thought- 'Due to the extreme heat of the Sun, all the water on this earth is getting evaporated. If this continues to happen then how would the creatures survive?'

Lord Brahma eulogised Surya to please him. He said- 'I make salutations to Surya who is the object of contemplation of great sages, who is the source of all energy. O Surya! It is only because of you that I can create, nurture and annihilate. You are the protector of this universe created from the Panchatatvas. Please subdue your radiance so that I can commence my creation.' Vivasvan Surya became very pleased by Brahma's eulogy and subdued his radiance. Thus, it became possible for Lord Brahma to begin his creation. He created the deities, demons, human beings, animals, vegetation etc. in the same way as he had done in earlier Kalpas.

PROGENIES OF KASHYAPA AND ADITI'S EULOGY OF DIWAKAR

Markandeya says- 'Lord Brahma, after having created the universe divided the earth into various islands. He also created the oceans and the mountains. Marie hi, the son of Brahma was the father of Kashyapa. Kashyapa was married to the ten daughters of Daksha. He had numerous sons from them like the deities, the demons and many creatures like reptiles. Aditi was the mother of the deities, Diti of the demons, Danu of the Danavas (monsters). Vinata gave birth to Garuda and Arun. Ravasa

was the mother of Yakshas and the Rakshasas, Kadru of the Nagas. Muni was the mother of Gandharvas. Krodha was the mother of Kulyava Ganas, Rishta of Apsaras. Ira was the mother of the elephants and Tamra was the mother of Shyeni. Ila gave birth to all the vegetation while Pradha gave birth to the insects. The earth was inhabited with the progenies of Aditi's sons.

Lord Brahma had made the deities masters of all the three worlds. This decision of Brahma had made the Daityas, Danavas and Rakshasas very angry. They got united and started causing obstacles in the path of the deities. A great battle was fought between the deities and the demons in which the deities were defeated. Aditi, the mother of the deities became very sad. She did a rigorous penance to please the Sun god. She observed fasts and eulogised the Sun god for most of her time. At last, the Sun god appeared before her but she could not bear his radiance which was so powerful that she could not even open her eyes. She requested him to subdue his power so that she could see him.

MANIFESTATION OF THE SUN GOD ADITYA AND THE VEDAS

Markandeya says- 'After Brahma came out from that egg, Rigveda manifested from his first mouth. From the mouth facing south, manifested the Yajurveda. After that, Samaveda manifested from his mouth facing west. In the end, Atharvaveda came out from the mouth facing north. The Rigveda symbolises the Rajo Guna while the Yajurveda symbolises the Satva Guna. Samaveda comprises of Tamo Guna whereas Atharvaveda is the mixture of Satva and Tamo Guna. The manifestation of the Vedas had illuminated the whole atmosphere. But the manifestation of Omkar overlapped their radiance and covered all the Vedas. At last, the radiance of the Vedas got united with that of the Omkar. The Rigveda symbolises the form of Brahma during the period of creation while Yajurveda symbolises Lord Vishnu during the whole period of nurturing. Samaveda is symbolical of Rudra at the time of annihilation.

Markandeya says- 'In the beginning of the creation, Surya shed unbearable amount of heat. This made the process of creation very difficult. Lord Brahma became worried. He thought- 'Due to the extreme heat of the Sun, all the water on this earth is getting evaporated. If this continues to happen then how would the creatures survive?'

Lord Brahma eulogised Surya to please him. He said- 'I make salutations to Surya who is the object of contemplation of great sages, who is the source of all energy. O Surya! It is only because of you that I can create, nurture and annihilate. You are the protector of this universe created from the Panchatatvas. Please subdue your radiance so that I can commence my creation.' Vivasvan Surya became very pleased by Brahma's eulogy and subdued his radiance. Thus, it became possible for Lord Brahma to begin his creation. He created the deities, demons, human beings, animals, vegetation etc. in the same way as he had done in earlier Kalpas.

PROGENIES OF KASHYAPA AND ADITI'S EULOGY OF DIWAKAR

Markandeya says- 'Lord Brahma, after having created the universe divided the earth into various islands. He also created the oceans and the mountains. Marichi, the son of Brahma was the father of Kashyapa. Kashyapa was married to the ten daughters of Daksha. He had numerous sons from them like the deities, the demons and many creatures like reptiles. Aditi was the mother of the deities, Diti of the demons, Danu of the Danavas (monsters). Vinata gave birth to Garuda and Arun. Ravasa was the mother of Yakshas and the Rakshasas, Kadru of the Nagas. Muni was the mother of Gandharvas. Krodha was the mother of Kulyava Ganas, Rishta of Apsaras. Ira was the mother of the elephants and Tamra was the mother of Shyeni. Ila gave birth to all the vegetation while Pradha gave birth to the insects. The earth was inhabited with the progenies of Aditi's sons.

Lord Brahma had made the deities masters of all the three worlds. This decision of Brahma had made the Daityas, Danavas and Rakshasas very angry. They got united and started causing obstacles in the path of the deities. A great battle was fought between the deities and the demons in which the deities were defeated. Aditi, the mother of the deities became very sad. She did a rigorous penance to please the Sun god. She observed fasts and eulogised the Sun god for most of her time. At last, the Sun god appeared before her but she could not bear his radiance which was so powerful that she could not even open her eyes. She requested him to subdue his power so that she could see him.

ADITI GIVES BIRTH TO ADITYA

Markandeya says- 'After being pleased by the eulogy of Aditi, the Sun shed its radiance and became sombre. Now, Aditi could see him. She

said- 'O lord! Be pleased upon me. The Daityas and the Danavas have captured all the three worlds from my sons. I request you to take birth as my son and defeat the demons.'

The Sun god agreed to take birth as her son. In course of time, Aditi became pregnant. She engaged herself in religious activities so that she could become a mother of a virtuous child. Seeing his pregnant wife observing fasts, Kashyapa became very angry. He said- 'It is not proper for a pregnant woman to observe fast as it may prove to be harmful to the foetus. Why are you trying to destroy it?' Aditi replied- 'I am not trying to destroy my foetus. After taking birth, our child will destroy our enemies.'

In her anger, Aditi released her foetus. Kashyapa started chanting the mantras of Rigveda. In a very short time, her child came out from that foetus. A heavenly voice was heard which said- 'O sage! Since you have called this foetus, Marit, therefore your son would be famously known as Martand.' After the birth of Martand, the morale of the deities was boosted up. Indra challenged the demons. A tremendous battle ensued between both the sides. Martand glanced towards the demons as a result of which they were charred to death. The deities were pleased and eulogised Martand. At last, the deities regained their territories they had lost to the demons.

Markandeya says- 'Vishwakarma had married his daughter Sangya to the Sun-god. But being unable to face the unbearable radiance of the Sun, she went to do penance after instructing her shadow to perform the duties of an ideal wife on her behalf. Ultimately, she returned back to her husband only after Vishwakarma had subdued the radiance of the Sun god. Vishwakarma then eulogised the Sun god by saying-1 make salutations to the Sun god whose existence is beneficial for the whole universe. I make salutations to one whose own origin remains a mystery and who enables our eyes to see. I make salutations to the Sun god who destroys darkness and who lightens up the whole world.'

ADITI GIVES BIRTH TO ADITYA

Markandeya says- 'After being pleased by the eulogy of Aditi, the Sun shed its radiance and became sombre. Now, Aditi could see him. She said- 'O lord! Be pleased upon me. The Daityas and the Danavas have captured all the three worlds from my sons. I request you to take birth as my son and defeat the demons.'

The Sun god agreed to take birth as her son. In course of time, Aditi became pregnant. She engaged herself in religious activities so that she could become a mother of a virtuous child. Seeing his pregnant wife observing fasts, Kashyapa became very angry. He said- 'It is not proper for a pregnant woman to observe fast as it may prove to be harmful to the foetus. Why are you trying to destroy it?' Aditi replied- 'I am not trying to destroy my foetus. After taking birth, our child will destroy our enemies.'

In her anger, Aditi released her foetus. Kashyapa started chanting the mantras of Rigveda. In a very short time, her child came out from that foetus. A heavenly voice was heard which said- 'O sage! Since you have called this foetus, Marit, therefore your son would be famously known as Martand.' After the birth of Martand, the morale of the deities was boosted up. Indra challenged the demons. A tremendous battle ensued between both the sides. Martand glanced towards the demons as a result of which they were charred to death. The deities were pleased and eulogised Martand. At last, the deities regained their territories they had lost to the demons.

Markandeya says- 'Vishwakarma had married his daughter Sangya to the Sun-god. But being unable to face the unbearable radiance of the Sun, she went to do penance after instructing her shadow to perform the duties of an ideal wife on her behalf. Ultimately, she returned back to her husband only after Vishwakarma had subdued the radiance of the Sun god. Vishwakarma then eulogised the Sun god by saying- I make salutations to the Sun god whose existence is beneficial for the whole universe. I make salutations to one whose own origin remains a mystery and who enables our eyes to see. I make salutations to the Sun god who destroys darkness and who lightens up the whole world.'

RAJYAVARDHAN'S SUBJECTS EULOGISE SUN GOD FOR HIS LONG LIFE

Kraustuki says- 'O lord! Enlighten us on the greatness of Bhaskar.'

Markandeya replied- 'There was a king named Rajyavardhan. His subjects were very happy and satisfied under his rule. They were free from all the diseases. Rajyavardhan ruled for 7,000 long years. His wife was Manini. One day, while Manini was applying oil on his head, she saw a grey hair. She became very sad and started crying. A drop of tear fell on the king. He asked the queen as to why she was crying. The queen told him about the reason. The king laughingly said- 'I am fully satisfied by my rule of 7,000 years. The grey hair on my head is an indication that I must now abandon my worldly life and become a recluse. This would be more appropriate forme.'

When his subjects came to know about his decision, they became sad. But nothing could make the king change his mind. He decided to become a recluse after appointing his son as his successor. The king called the astrologers for consultation. The astrologers advised the king to change his mind. But Rajyavardhan did not listen to them.

At last, his subjects decided to eulogise the Sun god and demand a long life for their king. All of them started worshipping the Sun god. A Gandharva whose name was Sudama appeared before them and instructed them to go to a forest named Guha Vishal and continue their penance. All of them went to the forest as per the instruction of the Gandharva. There was a beautiful temple of Lord Bhaskar in the forest. They worshipped Surya and eulogised him. Their worship continued for three months after which the Sun god became pleased and appeared before them. Lord Bhaskar asked them to demand any boon. He said- 'O Brahmin! Demand anything you wish.' All of them said- 'O lord! If you are really pleased with us, then bless our King Rajyavardhan with a long life. Please bless him with an eternal youth and a life free from all the deities. We want our king to live for 10,000 years. The Sun god blessed them by saying- 'So be it'.

After receiving the boons, all of them came to the king's palace and narrated the whole story. The queen was very pleased but the king was worried. The queen was surprised at the king's sadness even after getting such good news. The king replied- 'What is the use of remaining alive for 10,000 years? You won't be alive then. Will I be able to enjoy my life in your absence? Will not the deaths of my sons, my grandsons and my near and dear ones make me sad? The boon of myself enjoying life for 10,000

years will actually prove to be a curse.'

The queen sadly said- 'Whatever you have said is true. I could not understand this fact because of my ignorance. Now, you must do your duty, as the boon of the Sun god is not going to go in vain. The king decided to go to the Mountain Prabhriti and do penance. He wanted to receive a boon from Sun god, which enabled all his subjects and his relatives to remain alive as long as he lived. The queen also decided to move along with the king. Both of them did an austere penance. The Sun god appeared before them and blessed them. Thus, Rajyavardhan lived for 10,000 years along with his subjects.

RAJYAVARDHAN'S SUBJECTS EULOGISE SUN GOD FOR HIS LONG LIFE

Kraustuki says- 'O lord! Enlighten us on the greatness of Bhaskar.'

Markandeya replied- 'There was a king named Rajyavardhan. His subjects were very happy and satisfied under his rule. They were free from all the diseases. Rajyavardhan ruled for 7,000 long years. His wife was Manini. One day, while Manini was applying oil on his head, she saw a grey hair. She became very sad and started crying. A drop of tear fell on the king. He asked the queen as to why she was crying. The queen told him about the reason. The king laughingly said- 'I am fully satisfied by my rule of 7,000 years. The grey hair on my head is an indication that I must now abandon my worldly life and become a recluse. This would be more appropriate for me.'

When his subjects came to know about his decision, they became sad. But nothing could make the king change his mind. He decided to become a recluse after appointing his son as his successor. The king called the astrologers for consultation. The astrologers advised the king to change his mind. But Rajyavardhan did not listen to them.

At last, his subjects decided to eulogise the Sun god and demand a long life for their king. All of them started worshipping the Sun god. A Gandharva whose name was Sudama appeared before them and instructed them to go to a forest named Guha Vishal and continue their penance. All of them went to the forest as per the instruction of the Gandharva. There was a beautiful temple of Lord Bhaskar in the forest. They worshipped Surya and eulogised him. Their worship continued for three months after which the Sun god became pleased and appeared before them. Lord Bhaskar asked them to demand any boon. He said- 'O Brahmin! Demand anything you wish.' All of them said- 'O lord! If you are really pleased with us, then bless our King Rajyavardhan with a long life. Please bless him with an eternal youth and a life free from all the deities. We want our king to live for 10,000 years. The Sun god blessed them by saying- 'So be it'.

After receiving the boons, all of them came to the king's palace and narrated the whole story. The queen was very pleased but the king was worried. The queen was surprised at the king's sadness even after getting such good news. The king replied- 'What is the use of remaining alive for 10,000 years? You won't be alive then. Will I be able to enjoy my life in your absence? Will not the deaths of my sons, my grandsons and my near and dear ones make me sad? The boon of myself enjoying life for 10,000 years will actually prove to be a curse.'

The queen sadly said- 'Whatever you have said is true. I could not understand this fact because of my ignorance. Now, you must do your duty, as the boon of the Sun god is not going to go in vain. The king decided to go to the Mountain Prabhriti and do penance. He wanted to receive a boon from Sun god, which enabled all his subjects and his relatives to remain alive as long as he lived. The queen also decided to move along with the king. Both of them did an austere penance. The Sun god appeared before them and blessed them. Thus, Rajyavardhan lived for 10,000 years along with his subjects.

MARTANDADEV AND HIS DESCENDANTS

Markandeya says- 'Martandadev had a son named Manu. The seventh Manavantar in which we are living is named after him. Manu had many

sons among whom Narishyant, Nabhag, Prishadhna and Drisht were the rulers of different kingdoms. Manu had performed a special Yagya named Mitra-Varuna with the desire of having more sons. But after the Yagya, a daughter was born to him and who was named Ila. Manu then requested Mitra-Varuna to transform that girl into a boy, if he was really pleased with him. Both the deities blessed Manu and instantly that girl was transformed into a boy. He was named Sudryumna. One day, Sudryumna had gone to the forest for hunting. Incidentally, because of the wrath of Goddess Parvati, he again got transformed into a lady. At that time, he was married to Buddh and a son named Pururava was bom to them. Later on, he regained his body of the male. This time, he became the father of Utkal, Vinay and Gaya. All these three sons were very just rulers. Pururava was made the king of Pratisthanpur.

MARTANDADEV AND HIS DESCENDANTS

Markandeya says- 'Martandadev had a son named Manu. The seventh Manavantar in which we are living is named after him. Manu had many sons among whom Narishyant, Nabhag, Prishadhna and Drisht were the rulers of different kingdoms. Manu had performed a special Yagya named Mitra-Varuna with the desire of having more sons. But after the Yagya, a daughter was born to him and who was named Ila. Manu then requested Mitra-Varuna to transform that girl into a boy, if he was really pleased with him. Both the deities blessed Manu and instantly that girl was transformed into a boy. He was named Sudryumna. One day, Sudryumna had gone to the forest for hunting. Incidentally, because of the wrath of Goddess Parvati, he again got transformed into a lady. At that time, he was married to Buddh and a son named Pururava was born to them. Later on, he regained his body of the male. This time, he became the father of Utkal, Vinay and Gaya. All these three sons were very just rulers. Pururava was made the king of Pratisthanpur.

FAMOUS MYTHOLOGICAL TALES

KING PRISHADHNA

King Prishadhna was the son of Manu. One day, he had gone to the forest on a hunting spree. He killed a cow by mistake. This cow belonged to an Agnihotri Brahmin who was performing a Yagya. The Brahmin became very furious and cursed Prishadhna to become a Shudra. King Prishadhna too became angry and he wanted to retaliate. He took some water in his hand and was just about to curse the Brahmin, just then the Brahmin's father Mauli arrived. He warned both of them against cursing each other. He said- 'Anger decreases the life span of a man. It also destroys the knowledge and makes a man, a destitute. An angry person can neither be virtuous nor he can accumulate wealth. Even if the king had killed the cow deliberately, he is worthy of being shown compassion. But if he has committed this sin out of his ignorance, then certainly, he is not fit to be cursed. Therefore, O son! Don't curse the king. The cow must have died because of her own past Karmas.' King Prishadhna made salutations to the Agnihotri Brahmin and said in a loud voice- 'Be pleased on me. I did not kill the cow deliberately. It only happened by mistake. The Brahmin replied- 'O king! I have never spoken a lie in my life. Even my curse which I have given to you will not go in vain.' Sage Mauli took his son to his hermitage. In course of time, Prishadhna became a Shudra due to the curse.

FAMOUS MYTHOLOGICAL TALES

KING PRISHADHNA

King Prishadhna was the son of Manu. One day, he had gone to the forest on a hunting spree. He killed a cow by mistake. This cow belonged to an Agnihotri Brahmin who was performing a Yagya. The Brahmin became very furious and cursed Prishadhna to become a Shudra. King Prishadhna too became angry and he wanted to retaliate. He took some water in his hand and was just about to curse the Brahmin, just then the Brahmin's father Mauli arrived. He warned both of them against cursing each other. He said- 'Anger decreases the life span of a man. It also destroys the knowledge and makes a man, a destitute. An angry person can neither be virtuous nor he can accumulate wealth. Even if the king had killed the cow deliberately, he is worthy of being shown compassion. But if he has committed this sin out of his ignorance, then certainly, he is not fit to be cursed. Therefore, O son! Don't curse the king. The cow must have died because of her own past Karmas.' King Prishadhna made salutations to the Agnihotri Brahmin and said in a loud voice- 'Be pleased on me. I did not kill the cow deliberately. It only happened by mistake. The Brahmin replied- 'O king! I have never spoken a lie in my life. Even my curse which I have given to you will not go in vain.' Sage Mauli took his son to his hermitage. In course of time, Prishadhna became a Shudra due to the curse.

PRINCE NABHAG

Markandeya says- 'Nabhag was the son of King Dishta. One day, he saw a beautiful woman who was the daughter of a Vaishya. He was very

enchanted by her beauty and wanted to marry her. He went to the Vaishya and expressed his desire. The Vaishya was terrified at the prospect of facing the wrath of the king. He said- 'You belong to a royal family whereas I am a poor man. There is no match between both of us. Why do you insist on marrying my daughter?'

Nabhag was not amused at the Vaishya's reply. He threatened to give up his life if he was not married. The Vaishya went to the king and narrated the whole story. The king consulted his ministers and the Brahmins. The Brahmin said- 'Prince Nabhag should first marry a woman within his own caste, only then he can marry the Vaishya's daughter otherwise he would be committing a grave sin.

Nabhag was not satisfied by the Brahmins' decision. He decided to forcibly abduct the Vaishya's daughter. The Vaishya went to the king and sought his help. The king gave death punishment to Nabhag. Hearing of this punishment, Nabhag went into hiding. The royal army went in search of him and finally found him. Then a tough battle was fought and ultimately, Nabhag was victorious. The king himself came forward to fight with Nabhag. As the battle was going on, sage Narada appeared and requested the king to stop fighting. He said- 'O king! Please stop this battle. Being a Kshatriya, it is not proper for you to fight a battle with a Vaishya, which your son has become after abducting a Vaishya girl. He is not entitled to fight with you.'

PRINCE NABHAG

Markandeya says- 'Nabhag was the son of King Dishta. One day, he saw a beautiful woman who was the daughter of a Vaishya. He was very enchanted by her beauty and wanted to marry her. He went to the Vaishya and expressed his desire. The Vaishya was terrified at the prospect of facing the wrath of the king. He said- 'You belong to a royal family whereas I am a poor man. There is no match between both of us. Why do you insist on marrying my daughter?'

Nabhag was not amused at the Vaishya's reply. He threatened to give up his life if he was not married. The Vaishya went to the king and narrated the whole story. The king consulted his ministers and the Brahmins. The Brahmin said- 'Prince Nabhag should first marry a woman within his own caste, only then he can marry the Vaishya's daughter otherwise he would be committing a grave sin.

Nabhag was not satisfied by the Brahmins' decision. He decided to forcibly abduct the Vaishya's daughter. The Vaishya went to the king and sought his help. The king gave death punishment to Nabhag. Hearing of this punishment, Nabhag went into hiding. The royal army went in search of him and finally found him. Then a tough battle was fought and ultimately, Nabhag was victorious. The king himself came forward to fight with Nabhag. As the battle was going on, sage Narada appeared and requested the king to stop fighting. He said- 'O king! Please stop this battle. Being a Kshatriya, it is not proper for you to fight a battle with a Vaishya, which your son has become after abducting a Vaishya girl. He is not entitled to fight with you.'

CURSE OF SAGE PRAMATI

Markandeya says- 'The king stopped fighting at the request of Narada. Nabhag married the Vaishya girl. After the marriage, the king ordered

Nabhag to follow a Vaishya's occupation. Nabhag got engaged in activities like animal husbandry and agriculture. With the passage of time, a son was born and who was named Bhalandan. When he grew up, his mother entrusted him the job of looking after the cows. Bhalandan knew nothing about the job he was entrusted with. He went to sage Neep and told his problem. Sage Neep understood everything and taught him the nuances of handling various weapons as a result of which, he became a master in this art. After this, Bhalandan went to Vasurat, the son of Pitravya and demanded his share in the kingdom of his great-grandfather. Vasurat refused to give anything by saying- 'Being the son of a Vaishya, you are not entitled to become a king.' Bhalandan became very angry and attacked Vasurat with a huge army. In this battle, Vasurat was defeated. Now, Bhalandan had control over the entire earth. He returned to his father, Nabhag in order to hand over the reign of the kingdom, he had won in the battle. But Nabhag refused to take anything by saying - 'I have been cursed by my father to become a Vaishya. I cannot go against his wishes by taking over the responsibility of a king as this would disturb the peace of my ancestors who are in heaven and even I would not attain liberation. The second thing is that you have won this kingdom by your power and strength. It will not be proper for me to rule over this kingdom.'

Suprabha, the wife of Nabhag was listening to their conversation. She could not stop laughing. She said- 'You are not a Vaishya, because I too belong to a Kshatriya family. During ancient times, a king named Sudev had a friend, Nala. One day both of them went to the forest to hunt. In the forest, Nala saw sage Pramati's wife and became enchanted by her immense beauty. He wanted to marry he and tried to forcibly abduct her. Being a chaste woman, Pramati's wife started shouting for help. Sage Pramati heard her screams and arrived at the site. He became enraged when he saw Nala trying to abduct his wife and King Sudev doing nothing to protect her. Pramati requested King Sudev to protect his wife from Nala. King Sudev lied to sage Pramati about his caste, to help his friend-Nala. He said- 'I cannot help you because I am a Vaishya. You must go to any Kshatriya to take help. Sage Pramati was exasperated. He fumed-'You will certainly become a Vaishya as you have lied to me about your caste.'

CURSE OF SAGE PRAMATI

Markandeya says- 'The king stopped fighting at the request of Narada. Nabhag married the Vaishya girl. After the marriage, the king ordered Nabhag to follow a Vaishya's occupation. Nabhag got engaged in activities like animal husbandry and agriculture. With the passage of time, a son was born and who was named Bhalandan. When he grew up, his mother entrusted him the job of looking after the cows. Bhalandan knew nothing about the job he was entrusted with. He went to sage Neep and told his problem. Sage Neep understood everything and taught him the nuances of handling various weapons as a result of which, he became a master in this art. After this, Bhalandan went to Vasurat, the son of Pitravya and demanded his share in the kingdom of his great-grandfather. Vasurat refused to give anything by saying- 'Being the son of a Vaishya, you are not entitled to become a king.' Bhalandan became very angry and attacked Vasurat with a huge army. In this battle, Vasurat was defeated. Now, Bhalandan had control over the entire earth. He returned to his father, Nabhag in order to hand over the reign of the kingdom, he had won in the battle. But Nabhag refused to take anything by saying - 'I have been cursed by my father to become a Vaishya. I cannot go against his wishes by taking over the responsibility of a king as this would disturb the peace of my ancestors who are in heaven and even I would not attain liberation. The second thing is that you have won this kingdom by your power and strength. It will not be proper for me to rule over this kingdom.'

Suprabha, the wife of Nabhag was listening to their conversation. She could not stop laughing. She said- 'You are not a Vaishya, because I too belong to a Kshatriya family. During ancient times, a king named Sudev had a friend, Nala. One day both of them went to the forest to hunt. In the forest, Nala saw sage Pramati's wife and became enchanted by her immense beauty. He wanted to marry he and tried to forcibly abduct her. Being a chaste woman, Pramati's wife started shouting for help. Sage Pramati heard her screams and arrived at the site. He became enraged when he saw Nala trying to abduct his wife and King Sudev doing nothing to protect her. Pramati requested King Sudev to protect his wife from Nala. King Sudev lied to sage Pramati about his caste, to help his friend- Nala. He said- 'I cannot help you because I am a Vaishya. You must go to any Kshatriya to take help. Sage Pramati was exasperated. He fumed- 'You will certainly become a Vaishya as you have lied to me about your caste.'

BHALANDAN AND VATSAPRI

Nabhag told his wife- 'I would never accept the kingdom for the second time, which I had relinquished at the instruction of my father. He then

instructed his son to rule over the kingdom he had won. Following his father's instructions, Bhalandan started ruling over his kingdom. Later on, he got married and begot a son named Vatsapri. Vatsapri was married to Saunanda when he attained youth-hood. Vatsapri married her after killing the demon Kujrimbha. There was a king named Vidurath. He had two sons whose names were Suniti and Sumati. One day, while Vidurath was having his usual walk, he saw a large pit. He became very curious. Just then, a sage arrived at the scene whose name was Suvrat. Pointing his finger towards the pit, the king asked Suvrat as to what it was. The sage said- 'A demon by the name of Kujrimbha lives inside this pit. He controls all the events, which occur on this earth and in heaven. He possesses a mace called Sunand and which was made by Vishwakarma. This large pit which you see is the result of the assault, he made with his mace. This demon is very cruel and wicked. He torments the deities and destroys the oblation sites of the sages. There is one very peculiar characteristic related with his mace. The mace would become powerless if touched by a woman. But this is only a temporary change because it regains its power the next day. But this fact is unknown to the demon. After saying this, sage Suvrat went on his way.

King Vidurath returned to his palace and consulted his ministers. His daughter, Mudavati was listening to their conversation. One day, the demon abducted Mudavati. The king sent both his sons accompanied by a huge army to bring her back but the demon defeated them. The king made a declaration that he will marry his daughter to anybody who brings back his daughter and sons from the clutches of the demon.

Hearing his declaration, Vatsapri came to Vidurath and said- 'Give me your permission. I will bring back your daughter and your sons after releasing them from the clutches of the demon.' Vidurath gave the permission. Vatsapri entered into the nether land through that large pit. A tremendous battle ensued between him and the demon. This battle continued for three days. On the final day of the battle, the demon tried to take the help of his mace and went to grab hold of it. But sensing that the demon was going to pick up the mace, she immediately touched the mace as a result of which it became powerless. Being unaware of this happening, the demon attacked Vatsapri with that powerless mace. But he could not harm Vatsapri. Ultimately, Vatsapri was successful in killing the demon.

Vatsapri released all three of them- Suniti, Sumati and Mudavati from the demon's captivity and brought them back to the king's palace. After the death of the demon, Sheshnag acquired the mace. Mudavati's name was later changed to Sunanda, after that mace. King Vidurath became very pleased and married Mudavati to Vatsapri.

BHALANDAN AND VATSAPRI

Nabhag told his wife- 'I would never accept the kingdom for the second time, which I had relinquished at the instruction of my father. He then instructed his son to rule over the kingdom he had won. Following his father's instructions, Bhalandan started ruling over his kingdom. Later on, he got married and begot a son named Vatsapri. Vatsapri was married to Saunanda when he attained youth-hood. Vatsapri married her after killing the demon Kujrimbha. There was a king named Vidurath. He had two sons whose names were Suniti and Sumati. One day, while Vidurath was having his usual walk, he saw a large pit. He became very curious. Just then, a sage arrived at the scene whose name was Suvrat. Pointing his finger towards the pit, the king asked Suvrat as to what it was. The sage said- 'A demon by the name of Kujrimbha lives inside this pit. He controls all the events, which occur on this earth and in heaven. He possesses a mace called Sunand and which was made by Vishwakarma. This large pit which you see is the result of the assault, he made with his mace. This demon is very cruel and wicked. He torments the deities and destroys the oblation sites of the sages. There is one very peculiar characteristic related with his mace. The mace would become powerless if touched by a woman. But this is only a temporary change because it regains its power the next day. But this fact is unknown to the demon. After saying this, sage Suvrat went on his way.

King Vidurath returned to his palace and consulted his ministers. His daughter, Mudavati was listening to their conversation. One day, the demon abducted Mudavati. The king sent both his sons accompanied by a huge army to bring her back but the demon defeated them. The king made a declaration that he will marry his daughter to anybody who brings back his daughter and sons from the clutches of the demon.

Hearing his declaration, Vatsapri came to Vidurath and said- 'Give me your permission. I will bring back your daughter and your sons after releasing them from the clutches of the demon.' Vidurath gave the permission. Vatsapri entered into the nether land through that large pit. A tremendous battle ensued between him and the demon. This battle continued for three days. On the final day of the battle, the demon tried to take the help of his mace and went to grab hold of it. But sensing that the demon was going to pick up the mace, she immediately touched the mace as a result of which it became powerless. Being unaware of this happening, the demon attacked Vatsapri with that powerless mace. But he could not harm Vatsapri. Ultimately, Vatsapri was successful in killing the demon.

Vatsapri released all three of them- Suniti, Sumati and Mudavati from the demon's captivity and brought them back to the king's palace. After the death of the demon, Sheshnag acquired the mace. Mudavati's name was later changed to Sunanda, after that mace. King Vidurath became very pleased and married Mudavati to Vatsapri.

THE KINGDOMS OF PRANSHU, PRAJATI AND KHANITRA

Markandeya says- 'Sunanda gave birth to 12 sons. Their names were Pranshu, Praveer, Shoor, Suchakra, Vikrama, Krama, Bala, Balak, Chand,

Prachand, Suvikrama and Swarup. After growing up, Pranshu became the king. Pranshu had a son named Prajati. Prajati had five sons among whom Khanitra was one of them. Khanitra became a mighty king and was very famous for his religiousness and virtuosity. He distributed the kingdoms among his brothers. Shauri was made the king of the eastern region, Udavasu of the southern region. Muni of the western region while Maharathi was made the king of northern region.

One day, a minister of Shauri, Vishwavedi instigated him against his brother Khanitra by saying-'O king! You must try to capture your brother's kingdom as your kingdom is too small for your descendants to rule over. A time may come when your descendants would be forced to choose agriculture as their occupation because the continuous distribution of your kingdom among your progenies would leave almost nothing for them.'

Shauri said- 'My brother is so kind to me. Why should I cheat him like that?' The minister said-'The duty of the king is only to look after the kingdom's interest. The relation should not come in the way.' At last, the minister was successful in convincing him. After sometime, the wicked minister also influenced the rest of his brothers. Ultimately, King Khanitra was left all alone as all of his ministers and even his sons were misguided by Vishwavedi. Vishwavedi appointed four priests of Khanitra as the supervisor of Yagyas. One day, while the priests were performing Yagya, four ogresses appeared from the sacrificial fire and tried to attack King Khanitra. But they could not harm him because of his virtuous character. They then turned towards Vishwavedi and the priests and killed all of them. Thus, Vishwavedi bore the fruits of evil deeds.

THE KINGDOMS OF PRANSHU, PRAJATI AND KHANITRA

Markandeya says- 'Sunanda gave birth to 12 sons. Their names were Pranshu, Praveer, Shoor, Suchakra, Vikrama, Krama, Bala, Balak, Chand, Prachand, Suvikrama and Swarup. After growing up, Pranshu became the king. Pranshu had a son named Prajati. Prajati had five sons among whom Khanitra was one of them. Khanitra became a mighty king and was very famous for his religiousness and virtuosity. He distributed the kingdoms among his brothers. Shauri was made the king of the eastern region, Udavasu of the southern region, Muni of the western region while Maharathi was made the king of northern region.

One day, a minister of Shauri, Vishwavedi instigated him against his brother Khanitra by saying- 'O king! You must try to capture your brother's kingdom as your kingdom is too small for your descendants to rule over. A time may come when your descendants would be forced to choose agriculture as their occupation because the continuous distribution of your kingdom among your progenies would leave almost nothing for them.'

Shauri said- 'My brother is so kind to me. Why should I cheat him like that?' The minister said- 'The duty of the king is only to look after the kingdom's interest. The relation should not come in the way.' At last, the minister was successful in convincing him. After sometime, the wicked minister also influenced the rest of his brothers. Ultimately, King Khanitra was left all alone as all of his ministers and even his sons were misguided by Vishwavedi. Vishwavedi appointed four priests of Khanitra as the supervisor of Yagyas. One day, while the priests were performing Yagya, four ogresses appeared from the sacrificial fire and tried to attack King Khanitra. But they could not harm him because of his virtuous character. They then turned towards Vishwavedi and the priests and killed all of them. Thus, Vishwavedi bore the fruits of evil deeds.

KING KHANITRA

Markandeya says- 'People present at the oblation site were shocked to see the dead bodies of Vishwavedi and the four priests. When Khanitra got

this news, he too was shocked. Khanitra went to Vashishta and asked him the reason about the deaths of his brother's minister and the four priests. Vashishta revealed the conspiracy hatched by Vishwavedi to kill him (Khanitra). Khanitra in a sad tone, said- 'Shame on me as I have been the cause of the death of the Brahmins. Had I not taken birth as a human being, my brother's priests won't have died. I am the real culprit. What should I do now? Where should I go? The remorseful Khanitra decided to relinquish his kingdom and go to the forest to do penance so that, he could get liberated from the grave sins of causing death to the Brahmins. He went to the forest accompanied by his three queens after appointing his son Kshup as the king. He did a severe penance for 350 years. After that, he died because of his bad health. All the three queens died too and went to heaven along with him.

KING KHANITRA

Markandeya says- 'People present at the oblation site were shocked to see the dead bodies of Vishwavedi and the four priests. When Khanitra got this news, he too was shocked. Khanitra went to Vashishta and asked him the reason about the deaths of his brother's minister and the four priests. Vashishta revealed the conspiracy hatched by Vishwavedi to kill him (Khanitra).

Khanitra in a sad tone, said- 'Shame on me as I have been the cause of the death of the Brahmins. Had I not taken birth as a human being, my brother's priests won't have died. I am the real culprit. What should I do now? Where should I go? The remorseful Khanitra decided to relinquish his kingdom and go to the forest to do penance so that, he could get liberated from the grave sins of causing death to the Brahmins. He went to the forest accompanied by his three queens after appointing his son Kshup as the king. He did a severe penance for 350 years. After that, he died because of his bad health. All the three queens died too and went to heaven along with him.

KING VIVINSHA

Markandeya says- 'King Kshup ruled justly in the same way as his father Khanitra did. Kshup's wife was Pramatha. They had a son who was

handsome and mighty. He had defeated all the kings and annexed their kingdom. He was married to Nandini, the princess of Vidarbha. Nandini gave birth to a son who was named Vivinsha. Vivinsha was a very mighty king. During his reign, the earth had become very populated. The enemies of King Vivinsha were very afraid of him but his subjects were satisfied by his just rule. King Vivinsha had performed numerous Yagyas and after ruling for a long time, he attained martyrdom while fighting a battle.

KING VIVINSHA

Markandeya says- 'King Kshup ruled justly in the same way as his father Khanitra did. Kshup's wife was Pramatha. They had a son who was handsome and mighty. He had defeated all the kings and annexed their kingdom. He was married to Nandini, the princess of Vidarbha. Nandini gave birth to a son who was named Vivinsha. Vivinsha was a very mighty king. During his reign, the earth had become very populated. The enemies of King Vivinsha were very afraid of him but his subjects were satisfied by his just rule. King Vivinsha had performed numerous Yagyas and after ruling for a long time, he attained martyrdom while fighting a battle.

KING KHANINETRA

Markandeya says- 'Khaninetra was the son of King Vivinsha. He was very brave and valiant. The Gandharvas had proclaimed that no one could

match Khaninetra's benevolence, who had donated the whole earth after accomplishing 10,000 Yagyas. Khaninetra had given so much wealth as donations to the Brahmins that there was no need for them to take donations for the rest of their lives.

Khaninetra was sonless. One day, he went to the forest to hunt an animal for sacrificial purpose needed during Pitra Yagya. The performance of this Yagya was supposed to bless him with a son. In the forest, he saw a deer that was cognisant of his desire. The deer requested him by saying- 'O king! You can get my flesh by killing me.' The king was very amazed. He asked the deer as to why it was willing to get sacrificed. The deer replied- 'O king! I don't have any offspring. For this reason, I consider my life as useless.' While the conversation was going on between the king and the deer, another deer came near them and expressed his desire to get sacrificed by saying- 'O king! Please kill me and get the flesh because the flesh of this sonless deer would be of no help to you.' The king was astonished. He asked the second deer as to why he was willing to die. The second deer replied- 'O king! I have numerous sons and daughters and this worries me a lot. Whenever my children go out in search of food, I become very anxious till they have returned to me safely. This way, I pass the whole day and night in anxiety.

The king was very confused. He said- 'I don't know who is superior between a sonless person and a person who doesn't have any son. Although I needed the flesh for the accomplishment of Pitra Yagya but now after meeting both of you, I have become confused. It is true that a man has to face all kinds of sorrows because of their children but yet, a sonless man is not complete and remains indebted. So, I have decided to get a son by doing a penance just like my predecessors did in the past.'

KING KHANINETRA

Markandeya says- 'Khaninetra was the son of King Vivinsha. He was very brave and valiant. The Gandharvas had proclaimed that no one could match Khaninetra's benevolence, who had donated the whole earth after accomplishing 10,000 Yagyas. Khaninetra had given so much wealth as donations to the Brahmins that there was no need for them to take donations for the rest of their lives.

Khaninetra was sonless. One day, he went to the forest to hunt an animal for sacrificial purpose needed during Pitra Yagya. The performance of this Yagya was supposed to bless him with a son. In the forest, he saw a deer that was cognisant of his desire. The deer requested him by saying- 'O king! You can get my flesh by killing me.' The king was very amazed. He asked the deer as to why it was willing to get sacrificed. The deer replied- 'O king! I don't have any offspring. For this reason, I consider my life as useless.' While the conversation was going on between the king and the deer, another deer came near them and expressed his desire to get sacrificed by saying- 'O king! Please kill me and get the flesh because the flesh of this sonless deer would be of no help to you.' The king was astonished. He asked the second deer as to why he was willing to die. The second deer replied- 'O king! I have numerous sons and daughters and this worries me a lot. Whenever my children go out in search of food, I become very anxious till they have returned to me safely. This way, I pass the whole day and night in anxiety.

The king was very confused. He said- 'I don't know who is superior between a sonless person and a person who doesn't have any son. Although I needed the flesh for the accomplishment of Pitra Yagya but now after meeting both of you, I have become confused. It is true that a man has to face all kinds of sorrows because of their children but yet, a sonless man is not complete and remains indebted. So, I have decided to get a son by doing a penance just like my predecessors did in the past.'

KARANDHAM

Markandeya says- 'King Khaninetra went at the bank of the river Gomti and started doing a severe penance to please Indra. After being pleased

by his devotion and eulogy, Indra appeared before him. He said to Khaninetra- 'O king! I am very much pleased by your devotion. Demand anything you wish.' The king replied- 'O lord! If you are really pleased with me, then bless me with a religious and virtuous son because I am a sonless person.' Indra blessed him by saying-'So be it' and then disappeared.

Khaninetra returned to his palace. In course of time, a son was born to him. He named the child Balashva. When Balashva grew up, he became the king after the death of his father. He annexed many kingdoms after defeating his enemies and imposed taxes on them. After sometime, his enemies not only stopped paying him the taxes but also regrouped themselves and recaptured their lost territories. Balashva had become weak due to the constant battles. He had only the capital city in his possession and had lost the other territories. One day, his enemies surrounded his capital. Balashva became restless as he would be no match for his enemies. In a sorrowful mood, he heaved deeply covering his face by both his hands. The exhaled air resulted into the manifestation of numerous valiant fighters, chariots, elephants and horses. Very soon, this huge army covered the whole area. This army battled under the leadership of Balashva. Ultimately, the enemies were defeated. Later on, King Balashva became famous as Karandham because of the huge army, which had manifested from between both the trembling hands of Balashva.

KARANDHAM

Markandeya says- 'King Khaninetra went at the bank of the river Gomti and started doing a severe penance to please Indra. After being pleased by his devotion and eulogy, Indra appeared before him. He said to Khaninetra- 'O king! I am very much pleased by your devotion. Demand anything you wish.' The king replied- 'O lord! If you are really pleased with me, then bless me with a religious and virtuous son because I am a sonless person.' Indra blessed him by saying- 'So be it' and then disappeared.

Khaninetra returned to his palace. In course of time, a son was born to him. He named the child Balashva. When Balashva grew up, he became the king after the death of his father. He annexed many kingdoms after defeating his enemies and imposed taxes on them. After sometime, his enemies not only stopped paying him the taxes but also regrouped themselves and recaptured their lost territories. Balashva had become weak due to the constant battles. He had only the capital city in his possession and had lost the other territories. One day, his enemies surrounded his capital. Balashva became restless as he would be no match for his enemies. In a sorrowful mood, he heaved deeply covering his face by both his hands. The exhaled air resulted into the manifestation of numerous valiant fighters, chariots, elephants and horses. Very soon, this huge army covered the whole area. This army battled under the leadership of Balashva. Ultimately, the enemies were defeated. Later on, King Balashva became famous as Karandham because of the huge army, which had manifested from between both the trembling hands of Balashva.

KING AVIKSHEET

BIRTH OF AVEEKSHIT AND ABDUCTION OF VAISHALINI

Markandeya says- 'Shubhvrata- the daughter of Veeryachandra had decided to marry Karandham. A son was born to them who was named as Aveekshit. The astrologers had predicted a very bright future for him. Aveekshit learnt lessons in handling all kinds of weapons from the son of Kanva. In a very short time, he attained mastery in the art of weaponry. Vara, Gauri, Subhadra, Nibha, Lilavati, Manyavati and Kumridwati had chosen Aveekshit as their husband in a Swayamvara. Aveekshit had also forcibly married numerous other women.

Once, a Swayamvara was conducted in the palace of the king of Vishal for his daughter- Sudati Vaishalini. Aveekshit was present in the Swayamvara. But Sudati due to her arrogant nature did not choose Aveekshit as her husband. Hence, he forcibly abducted her by defeating the other kings. The fact that a single man had defeated all of them had made the other kings ashamed of themselves. All of them decided to fight Aveekshit unitedly. They picked up their arms and marched towards Aveekshit with a huge army.

KING AVIKSHEET

BIRTH OF AVEEKSHIT AND ABDUCTION OF VAISHALINI

Markandeya says- 'Shubhvrata- the daughter of Veeryachandra had decided to marry Karandham. A son was born to them who was named as Aveekshit. The astrologers had predicted a very bright future for him. Aveekshit learnt lessons in handling all kinds of weapons from the son of Kanva. In a very short time, he attained mastery in the art of weaponry. Vara, Gauri, Subhadra, Nibha, Lilavati, Manyavati and Kumridwati had chosen Aveekshit as their husband in a Swayamvara. Aveekshit had also forcibly married numerous other women.

Once, a Swayamvara was conducted in the palace of the king of Vishal for his daughter- Sudati Vaishalini. Aveekshit was present in the Swayamvara. But Sudati due to her arrogant nature did not choose Aveekshit as her husband. Hence, he forcibly abducted her by defeating the other kings. The fact that a single man had defeated all of them had made the other kings ashamed of themselves. All of them decided to fight Aveekshit unitedly. They picked up their arms and marched towards Aveekshit with a huge army.

AVEEKSHIT DEFEATED, LIBERATION AND DISENCHANTMENT

Markandeya says- 'A ferocious battle ensued between Aveekshits army and the other kings. Both sides fought bravely and Aveekshit managed to

kill many of the kings but was outnumbered and got severely wounded. Aveekshit was finally made captive. Aveekshit and Sudati Vaishalini were brought to the king of Vishal. The king instructed Sudati Vaishalini to choose any king as her husband but she refused this offer. The king then requested his astrologer to choose an auspicious day for her marriage. The astrologer said to the king- 'O king! The present time is not auspicious for marriage but don't worry, very soon, the princess would get married at the advent of the most auspicious moment.' When king Karandham came to know about his son's defeat and captivity, he consulted his friends. All of them decided to attack the kingdom of Vishal and release Aveekshit from captivity. Karandham marched towards the kingdom of Vishal followed by a huge army. A tremendous battle was fought for three days. Karandham became victorious in this battle. At last, Aveekshit was rescued from his captivity.

King Vishal decided to marry his daughter with Aveekshit but Aveekshit was disillusioned with life. He said to Vishal- 'I can never accept such a woman as my wife who has witnessed my defeat. I have decided to renounce life. So, it would be better if you marry your daughter with somebody else.'

King Vishal asked his daughter to choose any other king as her husband as Aveekshit was not willing to marry her.

But the princess wanted to marry Aveekshit and believed that he still remained an undefeated king because he had fought single-handedly with all the kings. He was defeated only because of unfair means adopted by his jealous rivals in the battle.

'I shall accept only Aveekshit as my husband otherwise I shall remain unmarried', said the princess. King Karandham requested his son to marry the princess but Aveekshit turned down even his father's request. Seeing the futility of his advice, Karandham returned to his kingdom. Aveekshit too went along with him.

Sudati Vaishalini went in the forest to do penance. She observed a fast for three months. She became very weak but still continued with her penance.

The deities felt sorry at her condition. They sent an envoy to persuade her to discontinue with her penance. The envoy requested her to stop torturing herself. 'You would be a mother of a Chakravarti king who would be mighty and powerful', said the envoy.

Sudati Vaishalini said- 'How can I become a mother without a husband? I have decided that nobody except Aveekshit will be my husband. But he has turned down my proposal. So, I have vowed to remain unmarried in this life.'

The envoy said- 'O great soul! I have been asked not to reveal much. You must take care of your health. Due to the virtues of your penance, you will certainly become a mother.' Sudati following her instructions and broke her fast.

AVEEKSHIT DEFEATED, LIBERATION AND DISENCHANTMENT

Markandeya says- 'A ferocious battle ensued between Aveekshits army and the other kings. Both sides fought bravely and Aveekshit managed to kill many of the kings but was outnumbered and got severely wounded. Aveekshit was finally made captive. Aveekshit and Sudati Vaishalini were brought to the king of Vishal. The king instructed Sudati Vaishalini to choose any king as her husband but she refused this offer. The king then requested his astrologer to choose an auspicious day for her marriage. The astrologer said to the king- 'O king! The present time is not auspicious for marriage but don't worry, very soon, the princess would get married at the advent of the most auspicious moment.' When king Karandham came to know about his son's defeat and captivity, he consulted his friends. All of them decided to attack the kingdom of Vishal and release Aveekshit from captivity. Karandham marched towards the kingdom of Vishal followed by a huge army. A tremendous battle was fought for three days. Karandham became victorious in this battle. At last, Aveekshit was rescued from his captivity.

King Vishal decided to marry his daughter with Aveekshit but Aveekshit was disillusioned with life. He said to Vishal- 'I can never accept such a woman as my wife who has witnessed my defeat. I have decided to renounce life. So, it would be better if you marry your daughter with somebody else.'

King Vishal asked his daughter to choose any other king as her husband as Aveekshit was not willing to marry her.

But the princess wanted to marry Aveekshit and believed that he still remained an undefeated king because he had fought single-handedly with all the kings. He was defeated only because of unfair means adopted by his jealous rivals in the battle.

'I shall accept only Aveekshit as my husband otherwise I shall remain unmarried', said the princess. King Karandham requested his son to marry the princess but Aveekshit turned down even his father's request. Seeing the futility of his advice, Karandham returned to his kingdom. Aveekshit too went along with him.

Sudati Vaishalini went in the forest to do penance. She observed a fast for three months. She became very weak but still continued with her penance.

The deities felt sorry at her condition. They sent an envoy to persuade her to discontinue with her penance. The envoy requested her to stop torturing herself. 'You would be a mother of a Chakravarti king who would be mighty and powerful', said the envoy.

Sudati Vaishalini said- 'How can I become a mother without a husband? I have decided that nobody except Aveekshit will be my husband. But he has turned down my proposal. So, I have vowed to remain unmarried in this life.'

The envoy said- 'O great soul! I have been asked not to reveal much. You must take care of your health. Due to the virtues of your penance, you will certainly become a mother.' Sudati following her instructions and broke her fast.

AVEEKSHIT PROMISES HIS FATHER TO GET MARRIED

Markandeya says- 'Once, Veera- the wife of King Karandham and mother of Aveekshit had taken a vow to accomplish a very arduous penance. But

this could only be accomplished with Karandham's and Aveekshits assistance. Karandham had assured her that he would provide all the wealth required for the accomplishment of that austerity while Aveekshit had assured her of physical help.

Veera commenced her arduous austerity named 'Kimichhak Vrata'. This particular Vrata had a peculiar characteristic and that was- any demand made during the course of the Vrata, ought to be fulfilled at any cost failing which meant forfeiting all the virtues of this arduous austerity.

King Karandham was consulting his minister about the means that would change Aveekshits decision regarding his marriage. The ministers said that as Karandham had become old, there was an urgent need for his successor. The question was that who would become king after Aveekshit as he had decided to remain unmarried. This thought was tormenting all of them.

Suddenly, King Karandham heard the priest who was assisting queen Veera in the accomplishment of the Kimichhak Vrata, telling somebody- 'The queen is busy performing the Kimichhak Vrata. What is your demand? I promise, it will be fulfilled by the queen no matter how extraordinary it may be.'

Aveekshit too arrived at the scene. He promised that their demands would be met without delay as it was obligatory for the success of Kimichhak Vrata, which his mother was performing. Seeing the time as opportune, King Karandham said before the people could say anything- 'O son! I have a demand. Promise me that you will fulfil it.'

Aveekshit gave his word. The king said that he aspired for a grandson but this was impossible unless he (Aveekshit) got married. Initially, Aveekshit tried to convince Karandham that it was an impossible task as he had vowed to remain a celibate but ultimately he had to change his mind to honor his words.

AVEEKSHIT PROMISES HIS FATHER TO GET MARRIED

Markandeya says- 'Once, Veera- the wife of King Karandham and mother of Aveekshit had taken a vow to accomplish a very arduous penance. But this could only be accomplished with Karandham's and Aveekshits assistance. Karandham had assured her that he would provide all the wealth required for the accomplishment of that austerity while Aveekshit had assured her of physical help.

Veera commenced her arduous austerity named 'Kimichhak Vrata'. This particular Vrata had a peculiar characteristic and that was- any demand made during the course of the Vrata, ought to be fulfilled at any cost failing which meant forfeiting all the virtues of this arduous austerity.

King Karandham was consulting his minister about the means that would change Aveekshits decision regarding his marriage. The ministers said that as Karandham had become old, there was an urgent need for his successor. The question was that who would become king after Aveekshit as he had decided to remain unmarried. This thought was tormenting all of them.

Suddenly, King Karandham heard the priest who was assisting queen Veera in the accomplishment of the Kimichhak Vrata, telling somebody- 'The queen is busy performing the Kimichhak Vrata. What is your demand? I promise, it will be fulfilled by the queen no matter how extraordinary it may be.'

Aveekshit too arrived at the scene. He promised that their demands would be met without delay as it was obligatory for the success of Kimichhak Vrata, which his mother was performing. Seeing the time as opportune, King Karandham said before the people could say anything- 'O son! I have a demand. Promise me that you will fulfil it.'

Aveekshit gave his word. The king said that he aspired for a grandson but this was impossible unless he (Aveekshit) got married. Initially, Aveekshit tried to convince Karandham that it was an impossible task as he had vowed to remain a celibate but ultimately he had to change his mind to honor his words.

AVEEKSHIT RESCUES VAISHALINI

Markandeya says- 'Once, Aveekshit had gone for a hunt in the forest when suddenly, he heard a female voice shouting for help. He proceeded

in the direction of the voice.

After reaching there, he saw Danu's (a demon) son Dhridhakesha, holding a lady by her hair. The woman was crying- 'I am the wife of Aveekshit. This wicked demon is trying to abduct me.' Aveekshit was surprised as to how could the lady claim that she was his wife. He apprehended that it must be the illusionary tactics of the demon to trap him. But despite his apprehensions, he went near the wailing woman to release her from the clutches of that demon. He warned the demon of dire consequences if he did not release her. The demon left the woman and attacked Aveekshit. A tremendous duel was fought. In the end, Aveekshit severed the head of that demon.

The deities were very pleased at Dhridhakesha's death. They praised Aveekshit for his bravery. They asked him to demand any boon.

Aveekshit demanded a valiant son for himself as per the aspirations of his father- Karandham. The deities said- 'You would get your son from this very woman, you have rescued. The child would become a very mighty king after growing up.'

Being unaware of the real identity of Vaishalini, he told the deities- 'I had vowed to remain a bachelor but changed my decision only due to the word I had given to my father. But I cannot marry this woman because by doing so, I would be breaching the trust of that woman who wanted to marry me and who had rejected everybody for my sake.'

The deities then revealed to him that this lady was none other than Vaishalini whom he was talking about. 'She had done a severe penance to be your wife.' After saying this, the deities disappeared.

Vaishalini requested him to accept her as his wife. 'You have rescued me from this demon. I offer myself to you', said Vaishalini.

AVEEKSHIT RESCUES VAISHALINI

Markandeya says- 'Once, Aveekshit had gone for a hunt in the forest when suddenly, he heard a female voice shouting for help. He proceeded in the direction of the voice.

After reaching there, he saw Danu's (a demon) son Dhridhakesha, holding a lady by her hair. The woman was crying- 'I am the wife of Aveekshit. This wicked demon is trying to abduct me.'

Aveekshit was surprised as to how could the lady claim that she was his wife. He apprehended that it must be the illusionary tactics of the demon to trap him. But despite his apprehensions, he went near the wailing woman to release her from the clutches of that demon. He warned the demon of dire consequences if he did not release her. The demon left the woman and attacked Aveekshit. A tremendous duel was fought. In the end, Aveekshit severed the head of that demon.

The deities were very pleased at Dhridhakesha's death. They praised Aveekshit for his bravery. They asked him to demand any boon.

Aveekshit demanded a valiant son for himself as per the aspirations of his father- Karandham. The deities said- 'You would get your son from this very woman, you have rescued. The child would become a very mighty king after growing up.'

Being unaware of the real identity of Vaishalini, he told the deities- 'I had vowed to remain a bachelor but changed my decision only due to the word I had given to my father. But I cannot marry this woman because by doing so, I would be breaching the trust of that woman who wanted to marry me and who had rejected everybody for my sake.'

The deities then revealed to him that this lady was none other than Vaishalini whom he was talking about. 'She had done a severe penance to be your wife.' After saying this, the deities disappeared.

Vaishalini requested him to accept her as his wife. 'You have rescued me from this demon. I offer myself to you', said Vaishalini.

AVEEKSHIT MARRIES VAISHALINI

Markandeya says- 'After Vaishalini had finished her lines, Aveekshit told her that he was forced to abandon her in the past after getting defeated

but once again, he had regained her after defeating the demon. Both of them decided to get married in the forest itself.'

'Right then, a Gandharva, Tanaya arrived there accompanied by many Apsaras and revealed to Aveekshit that Vaishalini was his daughter in her previous birth. 'Because of the curse given to her by sage Agastya, she was born to the king of Vishal. Now you must accept her as your wife.'

Aveekshit married Vaishalini under the supervision of Tumbaru, the priest of the Gandharvas. Both of them then accompanied the Gandharvas to the Gandharva loka. There, Vaishalini gave birth to a son. Knowing about the feats, the child would accomplish in future, the Gandharvas celebrated his birth ceremony with great fanfare. After the birth ceremony, while Tumbaru was eulogising the child, everybody heard a heavenly voice, which said- 'This child will become famous as Marut; he will become the ruler of all the Mahipals.' Everybody was extremely satisfied by this forecast.

AVEEKSHIT MARRIES VAISHALINI

Markandeya says- 'After Vaishalini had finished her lines, Aveekshit told her that he was forced to abandon her in the past after getting defeated but once again, he had regained her after defeating the demon. Both of them decided to get married in the forest itself.'

'Right then, a Gandharva, Tanaya arrived there accompanied by many Apsaras and revealed to Aveekshit that Vaishalini was his daughter in her previous birth. 'Because of the curse given to her by sage Agastya, she was born to the king of Vishal. Now you must accept her as your wife.'

Aveekshit married Vaishalini under the supervision of Tumbaru, the priest of the Gandharvas. Both of them then accompanied the Gandharvas to the Gandharva loka. There, Vaishalini gave birth to a son. Knowing about the feats, the child would accomplish in future, the Gandharvas celebrated his birth ceremony with great fanfare. After the birth ceremony, while Tumbaru was eulogising the child, everybody heard a heavenly voice, which said- 'This child will become famous as Marut; he will become the ruler of all the Mahipals.' Everybody was extremely satisfied by this forecast.

KING MARUT

MARUT ASCENDS THE THRONE

Markandeya says- 'After the birth of Marut, Aveekshit accompanied by Vaishalini returned to his father's palace. After making salutations to his father, he kept the new born baby in his lap and told him that he had kept his word. Karandham became very pleased after seeing his grandson.'

'In course of time, Marut grew up. He had mastered all the scriptures. He was also proficient in handling all kinds of weapons. There was nobody like him.'

'Karandham had become old. He decided to go to the forest after making Aveekshit the king but Aveekshit was not interested in becoming a king. He too wanted to go to the forest. He said- 'The shame of the defeat still remains there. How can a person, who was not able to protect himself, protect his subjects.'

Karandham tried his best to convince him to become his successor but Aveekshit was firm in his resolve Finding no other option, Marut was made the king.

Marut went to the forest and did penance for 1,000 years. His wife did the same and went to live in sage Bhargava's hermitage.

KING MARUT

MARUT ASCENDS THE THRONE

Markandeya says- 'After the birth of Marut, Aveekshit accompanied by Vaishalini returned to his father's palace. After making salutations to his father, he kept the new born baby in his lap and told him that he had kept his word. Karandham became very pleased after seeing his grandson.'

'In course of time, Marut grew up. He had mastered all the scriptures. He was also proficient in handling all kinds of weapons. There was nobody like him.'

'Karandham had become old. He decided to go to the forest after making Aveekshit the king but Aveekshit was not interested in becoming a king. He too wanted to go to the forest. He said- 'The shame of the defeat still remains there. How can a person, who was not able to protect himself, protect his subjects.'

Karandham tried his best to convince him to become his successor but Aveekshit was firm in his resolve Finding no other option, Marut was made the king.

Marut went to the forest and did penance for 1,000 years. His wife did the same and went to live in sage Bhargava's hermitage.

A HERMIT ADVISES MARUT ON BEHALF OF VEERA

Kraustuki asks Markandeya- 'O lord! We want to know more about Marut.'

Markandeya says- 'After becoming the king, Marut started ruling in a just manner. He performed many Yagyas under the supervision of numerous 'Yagyikas' and esteemed priests. Angira's son-Samvart and Brihaspati's brother were his chief priests under whose supervision, the Yagyas used to be performed. Samvart had brought the peak of Munjavan Mountain after uprooting it, for Marut. King Marut's palace and the sacred oblation site were constructed on this very mountain peak.'

One day, a hermit said to Marut- 'Your grandmother Veera is very tormented by the nuisance, the serpents are creating around the sacred oblation site. She is very displeased by your negligence. The serpents have bitten seven sons of a sage and have also polluted the water of the sacred pond. The sages have started making offerings to the serpents to please them, instead of paying attention on the performance of the Yagyas. Although the sages are capable of destroying the serpents, yet they have decided against doing so as this is not their job. This is the job of a king. A king should be aware of each and every event taking place in his kingdom. You are not aware of the misdeeds of the serpents because you don't have any detective to keep you informed of such events. Being a king, it is your duty to protect your subjects by punishing the wrong doers. If you don't do this then you will become a sinner. O king! Your grandmother is very much concerned about your negligent attitude and wants you to act in a way befitting a king.'

THE SERPENTS TAKE THE REFUGE OF BHAMINI (VAISHALINI)

Markandeya says- 'Marut was ashamed after hearing the sage's words. He cursed himself for his negligence. He picked up his bow and arrows in anger and went to the oblation site. When he reached there, he saw the dead bodies of seven hermits lying on the ground. Being enraged, he picked up his most devastating weapon named Samvartak. The serpents became terrified as the tremendous amount of heat generated by this weapon had started to burn them. Unable to bear the tremendous heat caused by the weapon, the serpents took the refuge of Bhamini (Vaishalini)-the mother of Marut.'

'Sometime in the past, Vaishalini had promised to protect the serpents when in danger. Vaishalini requested her husband- Aveekshit to persuade Marut against killing the serpents. Aveekshit told her that the intensity of

Marut's anger was a result of the grave sins committed by the serpents. 'But for your sake, I will request him to pardon the serpents- If he still does not agree to stop killing the serpents then I will have no option but to destroy his weapon- Samvartak. 1 After saying this, Aveekshit picked up his bow and arrows and went to the oblation site accompanied by his wife.

A HERMIT ADVISES MARUT ON BEHALF OF VEERA

Kraustuki asks Markandeya- 'O lord! We want to know more about Marut.'

Markandeya says- 'After becoming the king, Marut started ruling in a just manner. He performed many Yagyas under the supervision of numerous 'Yagyikas' and esteemed priests. Angira's son- Samvart and Brihaspati's brother were his chief priests under whose supervision, the Yagyas used to be performed. Samvart had brought the peak of Munjavan Mountain after uprooting it, for Marut. King Marut's palace and the sacred oblation site were constructed on this very mountain peak.'

One day, a hermit said to Marut- 'Your grandmother Veera is very tormented by the nuisance, the serpents are creating around the sacred oblation site. She is very displeased by your negligence. The serpents have bitten seven sons of a sage and have also polluted the water of the sacred pond. The sages have started making offerings to the serpents to please them, instead of paying attention on the performance of the Yagyas. Although the sages are capable of destroying the serpents, yet they have decided against doing so as this is not their job. This is the job of a king. A king should be aware of each and every event taking place in his kingdom. You are not aware of the misdeeds of the serpents because you don't have any detective to keep you informed of such events. Being a king, it is your duty to protect your subjects by punishing the wrong doers. If you don't do this then you will become a sinner. O king! Your grandmother is very much concerned about your negligent attitude and wants you to act in a way befitting a king.'

THE SERPENTS TAKE THE REFUGE OF BHAMINI (VAISHALINI)

Markandeya says- 'Marut was ashamed after hearing the sage's words. He cursed himself for his negligence. He picked up his bow and arrows in anger and went to the oblation site. When he reached there, he saw the dead bodies of seven hermits lying on the ground. Being enraged, he picked up his most devastating weapon named Samvartak. The serpents became terrified as the tremendous amount of heat generated by this weapon had started to burn them. Unable to bear the tremendous heat caused by the weapon, the serpents took the refuge of Bhamini (Vaishalini)- the mother of Marut.'

'Sometime in the past, Vaishalini had promised to protect the serpents when in danger. Vaishalini requested her husband- Aveekshit to persuade Marut against killing the serpents. Aveekshit told her that the intensity of Marut's anger was a result of the grave sins committed by the serpents. 'But for your sake, I will request him to pardon the serpents- If he still does not agree to stop killing the serpents then I will have no option but to destroy his weapon- Samvartak.' After saying this, Aveekshit picked up his bow and arrows and went to the oblation site accompanied by his wife.

THE HERMITS SONS BECOME ALIVE

Markandeya says- 'When Aveekshit reached the oblation site, he found that the whole atmosphere was ablaze by the tremendous heat generated

by Marut's weapon, Samvartak. He requested Marut to drop his weapon but Marut refused by saying- 'O father! These serpents are the culprits. They have killed the hermits sons. They have also polluted the reservoir and caused obstacles in the accomplishment of oblation-rituals. I am never going to forgive them.

Aveekshit told Marut that the serpents had taken his refuge and hence he should forgive them to protect the honor of his father's promise. When Marut did not listen, Aveekshit picked up his weapon 'Kal' to kill him. Marut enquired from him as to why he was trying to kill his own son, who was just performing his duty of protecting the oblation site from the serpents. Aveekshit replied that he too was duty bound to protect the serpents that had taken his refuge.

When the sages saw both father and son were bent on killing each other, they intervened and advised them against killing each other. Right then, a sage came with the news that the serpents had agreed to make all the dead sons of the hermit, alive. Thus, all the dead sons of the hermits became alive and once again, the father and son were prevented from killing each other. From then onwards, Marut took proper care while ruling his kingdom. Later on, he married Sukesha-the daughter of Kekaya, Saindhavi- the daughter of Sindhuraj, Vayushmati- the daughter of Chediraj etc. He had eighteen sons from his wives among whom, Narishyant was the eldest.

THE HERMITS SONS BECOME ALIVE

Markandeya says- 'When Aveekshit reached the oblation site, he found that the whole atmosphere was ablaze by the tremendous heat generated by Marut's weapon, Samvartak. He requested Marut to drop his weapon but Marut refused by saying- 'O father! These serpents are the culprits. They have killed the hermits sons. They have also polluted the reservoir and caused obstacles in the accomplishment of oblation-rituals. I am never going to forgive them.

Aveekshit told Marut that the serpents had taken his refuge and hence he should forgive them to protect the honor of his father's promise. When Marut did not listen, Aveekshit picked up his weapon 'Kal' to kill him. Marut enquired from him as to why he was trying to kill his own son, who was just performing his duty of protecting the oblation site from the serpents. Aveekshit replied that he too was duty bound to protect the serpents that had taken his refuge.

When the sages saw both father and son were bent on killing each other, they intervened and advised them against killing each other. Right then, a sage came with the news that the serpents had agreed to make all the dead sons of the hermit, alive. Thus, all the dead sons of the hermits became alive and once again, the father and son were prevented from killing each other. From then onwards, Marut took proper care while ruling his kingdom. Later on, he married Sukesha- the daughter of Kekaya, Saindhavi- the daughter of Sindhuraj, Vayushmati- the daughter of Chediraj etc. He had eighteen sons from his wives among whom, Narishyant was the eldest.

KING NARISHYANT

Markandeya says- 'Among the eighteen sons of Marut, Narishyant was the eldest. Marut ruled over his kingdom for 70,015 years after which

Narishyant succeeded him as the king. Marut went to the forest to do penance. After becoming the king, Narishyant decided to perform a grand Yagya, the like of which had never been accomplished by his ancestors. Narishyant made such huge donations to the Brahmins that it was more than enough for their future generations to come.

Once, Narishyant decided to organise another Yagya grander than the earlier one. But no priest was found to supervise it. At his repeated requests, some Brahmins agreed to supervise the Yagya. But this particular Yagya was unique of its kind because the Brahmins played the part of host as well as that of priests. The Brahmins made donations to the Brahmins who were acting as priests. In this grand Yagya, crores of Yagyas were performed in all the directions of the earth at one time. This grand Yagya was possible only because of the wealth donated to the Brahmins by King Narishyant. Narishyant was such a religious and virtuous king.

Narishyant felt joyous that due to his donations, the Brahmins had become wealthy and at the same time, he was also sad that his desire of performing a grand Yagya was not going to be accomplished as the Brahmins no longer needed donations.

KING NARISHYANT

Markandeya says- 'Among the eighteen sons of Marut, Narishyant was the eldest. Marut ruled over his kingdom for 70,015 years after which Narishyant succeeded him as the king. Marut went to the forest to do penance. After becoming the king, Narishyant decided to perform a grand Yagya, the like of which had never been accomplished by his ancestors. Narishyant made such huge donations to the Brahmins that it was more than enough for their future generations to come.

Once, Narishyant decided to organise another Yagya grander than the earlier one. But no priest was found to supervise it. At his repeated requests, some Brahmins agreed to supervise the Yagya. But this particular Yagya was unique of its kind because the Brahmins played the part of host as well as that of priests. The Brahmins made donations to the Brahmins who were acting as priests. In this grand Yagya, crores of Yagyas were performed in all the directions of the earth at one time. This grand Yagya was possible only because of the wealth donated to the Brahmins by King Narishyant. Narishyant was such a religious and virtuous king.

Narishyant felt joyous that due to his donations, the Brahmins had become wealthy and at the same time, he was also sad that his desire of performing a grand Yagya was not going to be accomplished as the Brahmins no longer needed donations.

SUMANA CHOOSES DAMA AS HER HUSBAND

Markandeya says- Dama was the son of Narishyant. His mother was Indrasena- the daughter of Babhru. He became the master in archery

under the tutelage of Vrishparva. He also learnt the nuances of handling other kinds of weapons under the guidance of Dundubhi. He learnt the scriptures from sage Shakti and the art of yoga from Ashartishen.

Sumana, the daughter of King Charusharma had chosen Dama as her husband in a Swayamvara. But Mahanand, Vayushman and Mahadhanu did not like her decision, as they too wanted to marry her. All three of them decided to abduct her by force and marry who ever among them she decided to marry with. Their evil intentions were corroborated by the friends of Dama. Thus, all three of them abducted Sumana. Dama became angry. He asked all the kings who were present in the Swayamvara- 'Tell me whether Swayamvara is religious or irreligious?'

One of the kings said that certainly a Swayamvara is religious and only Dama has the right to marry Sumana as she had herself chosen him. But some other kings supported Dama's opponents. They said- 'Rakshas Vivaha is the norm prevalent among people possessing arms. Only such a person has a right to marry Sumana who has defeated his rivals.'

Dama became furious with them. He knew that they were saying such things out of jealousy. But still he decided to accept their proposal. He threw an open challenge by saying- 'Anybody who wants to die may abduct my wife in front of my eyes.'

A tremendous battle was fought between Dama and his opponents.

At first, Mahanand came forward to fight him with a sword in his hand. Dama showered a volley of arrows at him. All the arrows were neutralised by Mahanand. After that, Mahanand jumped and climbed on the chariot of Dama. Dama severed his head. After the killing of Mahanand, Vayushman came forward to fight Dama but his sword was broken into two pieces by the assault of Dama. Dama then killed his charioteer. After that, Vayushman picked up his spiked mace but Dama destroyed even this mace. In the battle, Vayushman got injured and fell on the ground. Vayushman quit the idea of fighting. Seeing him reluctant to fight, Dama spared his life.

At last, Charusharma married his daughter Sumana with Dama. After staying for some days at his father-in-law's place, Dama returned home

accompanied by his wife Sumana.

SUMANA CHOOSES DAMA AS HER HUSBAND

Markandeya says- Dama was the son of Narishyant. His mother was Indrasena- the daughter of Babhru. He became the master in archery under the tutelage of Vrishparva. He also learnt the nuances of handling other kinds of weapons under the guidance of Dundubhi. He learnt the scriptures from sage Shakti and the art of yoga from Ashartishen.

Sumana, the daughter of King Charusharma had chosen Dama as her husband in a Swayamvara. But Mahanand, Vayushman and Mahadhanu did not like her decision, as they too wanted to marry her. All three of them decided to abduct her by force and marry who ever among them she decided to marry with. Their evil intentions were corroborated by the friends of Dama. Thus, all three of them abducted Sumana. Dama became angry. He asked all the kings who were present in the Swayamvara- 'Tell me whether Swayamvara is religious or irreligious?'

One of the kings said that certainly a Swayamvara is religious and only Dama has the right to marry Sumana as she had herself chosen him. But some other kings supported Dama's opponents. They said- 'Rakshas Vivaha is the norm prevalent among people possessing arms. Only such a person has a right to marry Sumana who has defeated his rivals.'

Dama became furious with them. He knew that they were saying such things out of jealousy. But still he decided to accept their proposal. He threw an open challenge by saying- 'Anybody who wants to die may abduct my wife in front of my eyes.'

A tremendous battle was fought between Dama and his opponents.

At first, Mahanand came forward to fight him with a sword in his hand. Dama showered a volley of arrows at him. All the arrows were neutralised by Mahanand. After that, Mahanand jumped and climbed on the chariot of Dama. Dama severed his head. After the killing of Mahanand, Vayushman came forward to fight Dama but his sword was broken into two pieces by the assault of Dama. Dama then killed his charioteer. After that, Vayushman picked up his spiked mace but Dama destroyed even this mace. In the battle, Vayushman got injured and fell on the ground. Vayushman quit the idea of fighting. Seeing him reluctant to fight, Dama spared his life.

At last, Charusharma married his daughter Sumana with Dama. After staying for some days at his father-in-law's place, Dama returned home accompanied by his wife Sumana.

KILLING OF NARISHYANT

Markandeya says- 'When the newly married couple Dama and Sumana returned to the capital, King Narishyant was extremely pleased. King Narishyant after knowing about the brave deeds of his son was very proud of him. As he had become old, he appointed Dama as his successor and he went in the forest to do penance accompanied by his wife- Indrasena.

Once, Vayushman came in the same forest where King Narishyant was doing his penance. After seeing Narishyant and his wife, he enquired as to, who they were. But King Narishyant did not give any reply as he was observing a Mauna Vrata. Somehow, Vayushman came to know about his identity that he was none other than the father of his bitter enemy- Dama. He felt that this was the most opportune moment for him to take his revenge and killed Narishyant. Indrasena on seeing her dead husband, started to wail. All the sages and hermits who were doing penance in that forest arrived there and started cursing Vayushman for the grave sin he had committed. Indrasena requested one of the sages to go and inform Dama about his father's death. She said-'Go and tell him that his father Narishyant has been killed by Vayushman while he was doing penance. Now, it was his duty to avenge his father's death.' After saying this, Indrasena committed Sati by jumping into the burning pyre of her husband.

KILLING OF NARISHYANT

Markandeya says- 'When the newly married couple Dama and Sumana returned to the capital, King Narishyant was extremely pleased. King Narishyant after knowing about the brave deeds of his son was very proud of him. As he had become old, he appointed Dama as his successor and he went in the forest to do penance accompanied by his wife- Indrasena.

Once, Vayushman came in the same forest where King Narishyant was doing his penance. After seeing Narishyant and his wife, he enquired as to, who they were. But King Narishyant did not give any reply as he was observing a Mauna Vrata. Somehow, Vayushman came to know about his identity that he was none other than the father of his bitter enemy- Dama. He felt that this was the most opportune moment for him to take his revenge and killed Narishyant. Indrasena on seeing her dead husband, started to wail. All the sages and hermits who were doing penance in that forest arrived there and started cursing Vayushman for the grave sin he had committed. Indrasena requested one of the sages to go and inform Dama about his father's death. She said- 'Go and tell him that his father Narishyant has been killed by Vayushman while he was doing penance. Now, it was his duty to avenge his father's death.' After saying this, Indrasena committed Sati by jumping into the burning pyre of her husband.

KING DAMA KILLS VAYUSHMAN

Markandeya says- 'When Dama came to know about his father's death, he became extremely furious. Although he was very patient by nature but

still the news of his father's death made him restless. He thought- 'Shame on me. Inspite of myself being alive, the wicked Vayushman had killed my father. I have failed in my duty. Being a king, it is my duty to punish the wicked people and protect the virtuous ones. But my enemy is still alive after committing a heinous crime. Now, I will perform my father's Tarpan only with the blood of Vayushman. If I fail in doing this, then I would give up my life by jumping into the fire. I will not only kill Vayushman but also his whole family. Whoever tries to help him will be put to death. Even if the deities, Yama or Kubera try to help him, they will get destroyed.'

Markandeya says- 'After taking a vow to kill Vayushman, Dama consulted his priests and ministers on his future course of action. All of them unanimously decided that Vayushman must be punished for his crime. At last, Dama marched along with a huge army towards Vayushman's kingdom.

When Vayushman came to know of Dama's arrival, he became very angry. The battle commenced. The chief commander of Vayushman's army attacked Dama but was killed by Dama. Seeing his chief commander dead, Vayushman tried to flee from the battlefield with his army. Seeing him flee, Dama challenged Vayushman. Vayushman accepted Dama's challenge and turned back to fight again. A ferocious battle was fought. In a very short time, Dama killed all the seven sons of Vayushman, his brothers, relatives and his friends. Vayushman was extremely angry at the death of his near and dear ones and he attacked Dama with his sword. But Dama pulling Vayushman by his hair, felled him on the ground and put his feet on his neck saying- 'I am now going to pierce the heart of this wicked and mean man. All the deities, human beings, sages etc. should witness this scene.' Saying this, Dama killed Vayushman. Blood started to ooze out from the wound inflicted on Vayushman's heart. Dama tried to drink that blood but was desisted from doing so by the deities. Then Dama performed the last rites of his father with that blood. In this way, he took his revenge.

KING DAMA KILLS VAYUSHMAN

Markandeya says- 'When Dama came to know about his father's death, he became extremely furious. Although he was very patient by nature but still the news of his father's death made him restless. He thought- 'Shame on me. Inspite of myself being alive, the wicked Vayushman had killed my father. I have failed in my duty. Being a king, it is my duty to punish the wicked people and protect the virtuous ones. But my enemy is still alive after committing a heinous crime. Now, I will perform my father's Tarpan only with the blood of Vayushman. If I fail in doing this, then I would give up my life by jumping into the fire. I will not only kill Vayushman but also his whole family. Whoever tries to help him will be put to death. Even if the deities, Yama or Kubera try to help him, they will get destroyed.'

Markandeya says- 'After taking a vow to kill Vayushman, Dama consulted his priests and ministers on his future course of action. All of them unanimously decided that Vayushman must be punished for his crime. At last, Dama marched along with a huge army towards Vayushman's kingdom.

When Vayushman came to know of Dama's arrival, he became very angry. The battle commenced. The chief commander of Vayushman's army attacked Dama but was killed by Dama. Seeing his chief commander dead, Vayushman tried to flee from the battlefield with his army. Seeing him flee, Dama challenged Vayushman. Vayushman accepted Dama's challenge and turned back to fight again. A ferocious battle was fought. In a very short time, Dama killed all the seven sons of Vayushman, his brothers, relatives and his friends. Vayushman was extremely angry at the death of his near and dear ones and he attacked Dama with his sword. But Dama pulling Vayushman by his hair, felled him on the ground and put his feet on his neck saying- 'I am now going to pierce the heart of this wicked and mean man. All the deities, human beings, sages etc. should witness this scene.' Saying this, Dama killed Vayushman. Blood started to ooze out from the wound inflicted on Vayushman's heart. Dama tried to drink that blood but was desisted from doing so by the deities. Then Dama performed the last rites of his father with that blood. In this way, he took his revenge.

THE BENEFITS OF READING MARKANDEYA PURANA

The birds said- 'O Jaimini! This was the way, sage Markandeya had narrated the divine tales to Kraustuki. A person who either studies this

Purana or listens to it achieves great accomplishment. All his desires are fulfilled and he enjoys a long life. He becomes free from all his sins. Markandeya Purana is the seventh among all the eighteen Puranas. Listening to it helps a man to atone for all the sins committed during the period of one hundred crore Kalpas. The virtues attained by listening to Markandeya Purana are equivalent to the virtues attained by making donations at Pushkar or by studying all the Vedas.'

Jaimini replied- 'O birds! You have enlightened my mind by narrating the tales of Markandeya Purana and have made it free from all sorts of confusion. May the almighty God bless you, may you enjoy a long life free from all the diseases.'

Saying like this, Jaimini went back to his hermitage.